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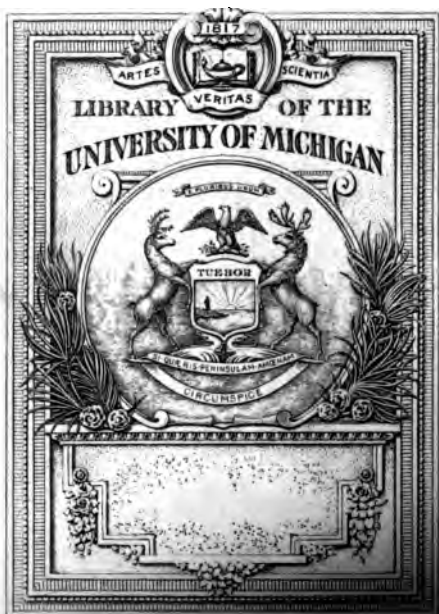
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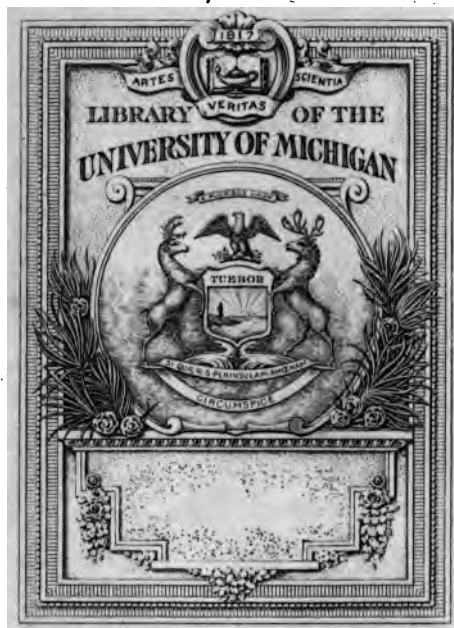

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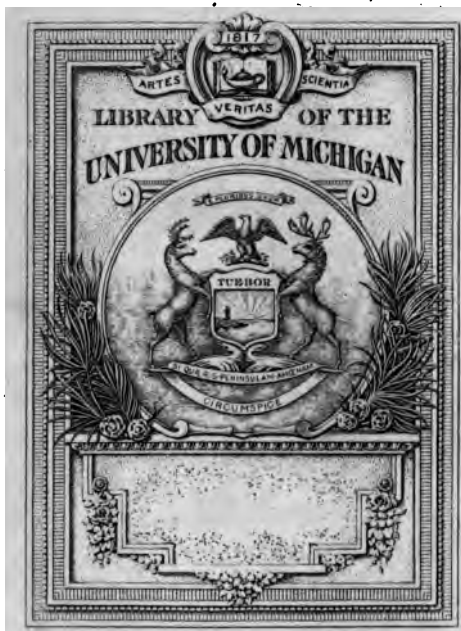
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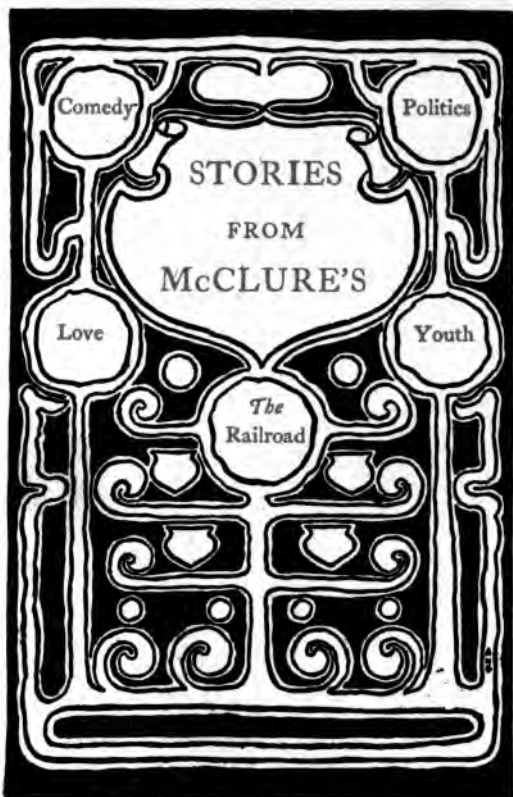
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Drawn by Violet Oakley.

"Good-by, my friend. I thank you—always."

Love in a Fog.

Love

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LOVE IN A FOG

LOVE IN A FOG

BY HESTER CALDWELL OAKLEY

FROM time to time other figures emerged with an uncanny suddenness from the darkness, and passed with as unnatural swiftness into it again, like the unreal phantoms of a lantern-slide

“ ‘ We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go,’ ”

quoted Brewster, with the pleasure that accompanies an aptly remembered phrase—a pleasure that with him never palled, as it so often does, for want of an appreciative listener other than oneself. And then, having caught up that string of Oriental pearls in the middle, he felt along for the succeeding beads, until the beautiful fatalism, more impressive in that loneliness than ever be-

fore, seemed to lessen his habitual self-reliance.

Until now, the thought of being lost never entered his head, although he had been walking in that confusing and absolute gloom for over a quarter of an hour. He stood quite still and tried to think out the compass, gasping in rueful, incredulous amusement, as wave after wave of bewildered uncertainty swept over him.

It was just at this moment, as he so stood, trying to realize that he, Ralph Brewster, hunter and ardent woodsman, was more hopelessly turned about in the most familiar part of London than he had ever been in the depth of the forest primeval, that a distinct, quick call smote him from somewhere beyond in the muffling fog.

It came again: "Help me! Come to me some one!" A woman's voice unmistakably; unmistakably, too, the voice of a refined woman, and holding in it, to Brewster's ear—an ear curiously sensitive where voices were concerned—a strange mingling of fright and command.

"Yes," he called in reply, trying to brush away the choking cloud with impatient hands. "Hold on, I'm coming. Speak again, so that I can place you."

In answer, the haunting voice sounded once more; this time seemingly ahead, and a little to the right. "Here I am. Come at *once*, please.

The imperative note was even more distinguishable, and Brewster steered toward the sound with outstretched, groping arms. In a minute he called again: "Where are you now?" and this time the response came, more faintly, from the left: "Here! Can you not find me?" its command more insistent than ever.

"For Heaven's sake!" Brewster shouted, "keep still, if you don't want me to lose you altogether. Don't move a single step, and call to me steadily!" His voice now held an imperative ring, and the woman evidently recognized its masterfulness, for she did as he commanded; and again Ralph plunged forward toward the intangible sweetness of the calling voice.

A London fog is almost as deceptive to

ears as to eyes, and thus it happened that, before the object of his search seemed to the man's hearing close at hand, his groping hands touched something which loomed up with such suddenness out of the obscurity that a rather sharp collision was inevitable. Brewster drew back apologetically, and the girl—for it was only a girl—uttered an exclamation of indignant surprise, followed by a little ripple of inconsistent, involuntary laughter, checked as soon as born.

"Oh," she said, "I am very glad you have found me at last. What a long time you were about it! I have been lost for quite an hour in this frightful fog, and I must get home at once."

"I should have found you sooner," Brewster retorted, somewhat resentfully, for her tone suggested a condescension unbearable, under the circumstances, "but you must have moved, did you not, after I first called?"

"Of course I did," the girl replied with spirit, "I tried to come to meet you."

"Oh, that is fatal in a fog," Brewster

exclaimed. "Two people drift apart at once, if they play at cross purposes like that; for, between calls, they may be moving in exactly opposite directions. The only way is to remain stationary as a——"

"Fog-horn?" the girl suggested, brightly, with a keen, quick glance at her companion. In spite of the dusky dimness in which he was partially shrouded, though close at her side, both his voice and bearing convinced her that the man was a gentleman in whom she might trust; and her manner changed a trifle, although the condescension was still slightly noticeable.

"Exactly," Brewster agreed, gravely. Then courteously—"I rather fear I am lost myself; but I may be able to be of some assistance to you. It is a frightful night for a woman to be out alone, and dangerous as well. Where do you wish to go?"

The implied disapproval of this remark seemed to sting the girl to an explanation, in spite of herself; and she began with an increased haughtiness. "To the Metropole. Surely it cannot be very far. I came out early this afternoon to the National

Gallery, and while there sent my companion off on an errand. She was to return in an hour, at four o'clock. But after I grew tired of looking at the pictures, and found the time was up, of course"—impatiently—"I could wait no longer, and so—I started home."

"But the fog—surely by that time, it must have been very thick. You should never have attempted——"

"Yes," she admitted, unwillingly, "it was thick, and it grew worse so rapidly. But—what would you?" with a pretty, oddly foreign gesture. "I could wait no longer, I knew the way, and who could have dreamed it would so soon become like this?" A shade of mischievous regret crept into her voice as she added, as if to herself, "How they will scold! Poor Nathalie! She, too, is lost, I fear. That is what kept her. I thought it could be nothing but sudden death, she grumbled so at leaving me! But," turning abruptly, "you will take me home, sir, as quickly as possible, will you not?"

"You may be sure of that," returned

Ralph, again slightly nettled. Where in the world lay the charm of staying out longer than was necessary in a cold, dank fog, with this pert, self-willed school-girl, he should like to know? He asked himself the question angrily, and was surprised to find another self recognizing that, absurd as it might seem, there was a distinct charm.

"But why do we not move on, then?"

With a sudden surrender to the humor of the situation, Brewster broke into a laugh. "Move on?" he said. "Yes, we might, if we only knew in which direction to move!"

The girl watched him a minute, and then joined in. The laugh cleared the mental atmosphere, if not the material one, and Brewster asked: "How long had you been calling when I came?"

"Only a minute. I could not bear to speak sooner. I did not know who might answer, and I thought I must find my way in time—it is such a short distance, you know? I am sure I started right at first; but then, after a time, I came to such a dreadful place, all noisy men and wagons; and it was then that I became so turned

around and hopelessly tangled, I suppose; for, pretty soon, I found myself here—apparently in a place where there was *no-body*. I stood it as long as I could, and then I could not bear it any longer. It was unspeakable, the loneliness! I called, and then—you answered!”

Yes, her voice was marvelously sympathetic. In its flexible changes Brewster could trace every gradation of her experience—the arrogant self-confidence of her departure; the shrinking disgust at the rough, clamoring crowd, the desperate, overmastering sensation of loneliness; and, finally, the passionate relief at his answer to her appeal. The hint of this last feeling thrilled him swiftly, and he felt all at once an immeasurable desire and capacity to move mountains, in order that this delicate highbred girl beside him might walk unobstructed henceforth. Unfortunately, no mountains were at hand, only the fog, grim, relentless, omnipresent—like a melodramatic ghost—the clutch of whose clammy fingers no power other than the elements could shake off.

But her words gave him a clue. "I say!" he exclaimed, gladly, "See here! You must have been wandering about in a circle around the square! That would account for there being so few people! If *that's* the case, we'll soon find our bearings. Yes—I started out from the Oxford and Cambridge Club fifteen minutes or so ago; and, so far as I can make out, I've been heading east ever since. Walking rather slowly, that ought to bring me, by now, just about to Trafalgar Square."

"Nonsense!" his companion declared, "I could hardly be so stupid as to walk around in a circle. It is unreasonable!"

"Oh, but I assure you, it's not unreasonable in the least," Brewster protested. "It's what every inexperienced person does when lost. It's the most natural thing in the world. We'll move forward slowly; and, if I'm right, as I begin to think I must be, we'll soon strike something that will prove it."

Move forward, accordingly, they did—cautiously, for the fog was like a dense wall, behind which no fate seemed too subtle or

fearsome to lurk. And sure enough, before long they did meet "a lion in the path"—a Landseer lion—by which token Brewster knew, at once, that Nelson's column was at hand, a vantage point from which to base further calculations.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "This is better luck than I dared hope for. If we had struck any of these other old duffers, whose pedestals are alike as peas, it would have been as complicated as the highest sort of mathematics. As it is, the problem's simple as A B C!"

"I do not really see that we are so much better off than before," the girl answered, with a sort of triumphant willfulness. "As I remember it, there are four lions, are there not? And consequently four sides to Nelson's column. How do you know which side this is, then? It seems to me that there are just three chances to one against our starting out in the right direction from here!"

"Then it's simply a case of 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again,'" Ralph retorted, with rising good humor.

"This is my plan. The column is in the center of the square, *east and west*; but it is very near to the curb on the *south* side; while the *southeast* lion—if my architectural head doesn't play me false—points directly toward Northumberland Avenue, which, as you know, is the street we're after. So you see, all we have to do is to start straight ahead, from the side we're on, and walk about twenty paces. Then, if we don't come to the curb, do as the King of France did, 'March back again,' and begin all over from another side, until we do strike it—do you see?"

Yes, she saw, with a quick grasp of his points that delighted Brewster, as did, still more, the girlish gusto and abandon with which she entered into the whole thing. He grasped one end of her slim little umbrella, telling her to hold to the crook behind him; while he made wild lunges ahead with his cane, because, as he said, "you never can tell what *lusus naturæ* you may meet with at any minute in a London fog!" They both shuddered at the thought of the way she might have pitched headlong down the steps

that connect the curious stone terraces of Trafalgar Square.

In the heat of this discussion, during the second voyage of exploration from the column, they lost count of their steps, and, before they knew it, were confronted with a pedestal, which Brewster declared must be that of General Gordon, who had embraced the opportunity of the fog to move up and hob-nob with Nelson, since it had surely never been so close before. They faced about, and he made for the column again, in secret perturbation lest they had been turned about and bumped into one of the other statues—in which case their friendly vantage-point would not be forthcoming—but was relieved to find he was right, and there had been no more serious mistake than in the extra number of steps they had taken.

Out again for the third time. Ralph felt as if they were two children, playing at nothing more responsible or arduous than a game of Blind Man's Buff; and when, at the fourth venture, they finally found the long-lost curb (with a unanimous exclamation, in which triumph and regret were

ridiculously blended), the man had a keen sensation that they might claim to be old, old friends by this time, as becomes those who have grown up together through a long, happy youth.

Back for the last time, to the column steps, to the left of which (facing the curb) crouches the "southeast lion," gazing with stony eyes down Northumberland Avenue. "Good for Nelson!" ejaculated Brewster. "To have beaten Napoleon's fleet was nowhere beside overcoming a London fog!" And the girl laughed merrily, "He has always been one of my heroes. I shall appreciate him more than ever after this!"

When they started slowly on again, she asked, gently, as if touched by his patient persistence and clever planning: "I hope I'm not taking you greatly out of your way? It would be such a pity;" and Brewster answered with a joyous ring in his voice: "Not in the least. Why, we are close neighbors. Isn't it odd? I am staying at the Victoria, right next to you. You see it was the very luckiest thing in the world, my running across you. I should

never have gotten my own bearings without your hints."

"How good you are to put it so. I think the indebtedness is all on my side—I *was* foolish!" she admitted, with a degree of mental surprise at the concession which would have amazed Ralph Brewster, simply because he could not have comprehended it. To him owing to a fault was the most natural and immediate outcome of its recognition. "But who could have dreamed of this!" she went on. "Oh, what a country, this England of yours! It would kill me; I could not breathe in it! Faugh!"

"But it is not *my* England," Brewster answered, laughing at the vivid disdain of her voice. "I'm an American, you know? And that accounts for my stupidity in dealing with this sort of thing. If I had been a Britisher, I should have had you home long ago, I dare say." He ended with a mental reservation, "Thank Heaven, I'm not, then!" which, if revealed, might, in turn, have been a surprise to his companion.

She looked up, interestedly. "America?" she said. "I might have known it.

But why were you so surprised, then? I thought it was the custom, over there, for women to do exactly as they pleased; to go out and about alone and unprotected at any hour. Oh, how I have longed for the freedom of it all at times!" she ended, with a note of weariness that caught Brewster's quick ear.

"You are then——?"

"I am a German," she answered, with a sort of finality that, somehow, checked the further questioning which rose to Ralph's lips.

As they reached the street on which the Metropole stands, a huge dray lumbered up suddenly out of the blackness behind; and, with a quick backward motion of his arm, trained years before to pull stroke on his 'Varsity eight, Ralph caught the girl from her feet, and lifted her around in front of him, out of the way of the uncouth and mammoth thing. When they moved on he reached out and drew her arm up through his, holding it firmly to his side, while around them—all around them—the blessed, the kindly fog shut down again,

separating them from the rest of the world, leaving him in a new world of his own, with this one woman, in whose presence he was conscious of a restfulness that was akin to nothing, perhaps, so much as the glad surprise of quiet, deep, harbored waters after a stormy uncertainty.

And now for a while, they did not speak at all; but Brewster knew, by a sort of sixth sense, that her silence held no estrangement. They moved on as if in a dream. Was it indeed anything else? The isolation; the unreality of past or future, of anything but the intense, all-sufficing present; the complete disconnection with any fellowship beyond the limitless one of the other dream-figure at his side—that figure so vital and real where it touched him closely, but fading itself, at the farther points, into unsubstantiality. Where but in a dream could one find such conditions?

Just before they reached the hotel the girl turned, pointing to a light which flashed by them only to be swallowed up, the next instant into nothingness again. "What are

those," she said, "those lights? I have noticed them, at intervals, ever since we started."

A sudden temptation rose in Brewster's heart, grappled with his speech, and was worsted. He had yielded tacitly to one already, but he would at least be honest with her now. There was a dread, however, in his eyes as he looked down at her. "Those are the link-boys," he said seriously.

"The link-boys?" she repeated, questioningly.

"Yes, the link-boys," he continued, unsparingly, "the men who carry about lighted torches, and make it their business to find people who are lost in the London fogs, and show them to their destination." Unconsciously he was repeating the phraseology of a London guide-book, but his eyes held hers as he spoke.

"Then you—when you—when we, were lost——" she faltered, "you might—all the time—you might——"

"Yes, I might have hailed one, and he would have led us home in half the time,"

Ralph blurted out. "It was caddish—it was dishonorable in me; but I—forgive me—I——"

He stopped, for he felt rather than saw that his companion was smiling. "It was better so," she said, with a sweet, light graciousness. "It was most thoughtful. I should so much have preferred you to bring me home quietly like this, than to have come in—how do you say it?—a 'torch-light procession?'"

In another instant they had reached the entrance; and, with his swift return to everydayness, Brewster found his exalted sensations replaced by the most lusty and prosaic hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

The girl drew her arm from his with a quick determination and lifted her face. As she did so and he saw it clearly, for the first time, in the subdued glare, the man was struck with its expression—a sort of hopeless weariness, inconsistent with its youth and extreme fairness.

"No, do not come any further," she said, gently, when he made as if to accompany

her up the steps. "Please! I do not wish it. It only remains for me to thank you. Indeed I do thank you," she continued, hesitatingly, but with a deeper note, which lent a new gravity and dignity to her beautiful voice. "You have spared me great trouble, and you—saved my life, I think, that time when—when the wagon—— I am glad to owe my life to you. I am glad to have known you. I wish I too—I too—had been born in America. Will you not tell me your name, that I may remember my good friend?"

Brewster fumbled eagerly in his pocket, and handed her his card. "It was nothing—it was everything—I mean I am so glad—" he murmured, confusedly, for the happiness her words gave him impeded speech—"so glad to have been of the least service."

They were standing at the foot of the hotel steps, a little to the side, where she had stopped him. People were jostling by them, in and out of the warm, brilliantly lighted hall-way beyond, against the brightness of which her slender figure was sil-

houetted tenderly, her hair making a soft halo about her shadowed face. Behind them lay the fog, in the sphinx-like depths of which the man fancied that he had found an answer to the riddle of his life. He held out both hands. "Your name?" he said, disconnectedly. "This is only *auf wiedersehen*—I must see you again. I——"

The girl seemed surprised at the impetuous gesture, but the next instant she laid her hand confidently in his eager ones. Then she straightened, and drew them gently away. Her words came softly. "My name is Alexandrine Hennebourgh. Good-by, my friend. I thank you—always!" she said; and then was gone up the steps.

For a minute or two he stood where she had left him, gazing stupidly after her. Then he pulled himself together with a short, happy laugh, and turning, groped his way back, through the fog, to his own hotel. Arrived there, and in the friendly seclusion of his own room, he paced up and down in a sort of exaltation. His passage had been engaged for the following Satur-

day, but he had thought of that as he came in, and had wired from the hotel office, giving up his state-room. How he exulted now to think how completely he was his own master, appreciating the good fortune of his singular aloneness as never before. What was to hinder if he chose to follow his fog-maiden, his will-o'-the-wisp, through all the world! Plans? Her plans should be his. As for him he would make no plans. And, forthwith, he set to work at the most tempting architecture in the world, castle-building! How it all haunted him—every turn of her head, every intonation of her voice. Why, his impression of the girl was as vivid as if he had known her all his life, as indeed he had, he told himself, convincingly for life had only begun with him from the moment he heard that calling voice.

Alexandrine! How perfectly it suited her! The beginning of it, stately and imperious, with the tender, playful diminutive ending; the whole name full of dignity and strength, and yet so womanly! Henneborough! Ah, that was not so good! Too German perhaps—an American name would

be better. He laughed at himself again, for his own eager boyishness; glad of his youth; glad of his wealth and good name, that he might use them all as helps in winning her. He must be patient, oh, yes, and circumspect, and not let her dream at first, or frighten her by the suddenness of it all. He would invent excuses; he would employ Machiavellian adroitness in explaining his presence, his behavior. Yes, he would be patient. To-morrow, he would wait to present himself till afternoon. He would leave her the whole morning free. A morning? A month rather! But he would leave it to her, free. In the afternoon, at four, or probably three—possibly at two—he would call—and so on, and so on, till far into the morning which he had so generously resolved to abnegate.

Accordingly, the next day, he killed time in numerous ways. He read the newspaper, and then caught himself wondering what the deuce there was in it anyway. Then he took a piece of paper, and grew intensely absorbed over a rough map of their journeyings in the fog the night before, living

every step of the way over again. " ' But, oh, there is another crime I haven't mentioned yet! ' " he quoted, under his breath, when he came to Nelson's column. " I *stole* that third trip, my lady! I wonder if it occurred to you that General Gordon could have directed us, without the extra excursion! " He labeled the plan " Map of the World, " and then tucked it tenderly away in his wallet, smiling to himself as he speculated how long it would be before he would dare to tell her about it, to show it to her!

After this, he dressed with more care and temper than he had ever before expended, fuming at his man, and then sending him out of the room, the proud and forgiving possessor of an all but brand-new suit of clothes and a top-coat. Subsequently, he made his way over to Hyde Park, where he strode up and down the Row in the mellow October sunshine, whose hazy quality was the sole legacy of yesterday's fog.

As he walked there, in the soft, kindly air, watching the people with an amiable benevolence and universal overflowing good-

will toward men, which he himself would have described as "doting," there was a sudden stir, and then an open carriage came bowling rapidly along—a very fine carriage; in fact, a most noticeable carriage, with a curiously familiar coat-of-arms on paneling and trappings. As it came toward him Brewster recognized the Princess of Wales, who sat on the back seat, beside a very stately old individual, whose breast so glittered with insignia that one naturally inferred he must be a very important individual indeed. Then, as they flashed quickly past, the face of a girl on the front seat, with her back to the horses, arrested his carelessly interested eye, and—burned itself into his inner consciousness! A girl with a slender, beautifully clad figure; with a cloud of light, wind-blown hair, and a small flower-like face, on which was stamped the expression of bored weariness which Ralph had noticed once in the eyes of his fog-maiden of the night before.

Just at that instant she caught sight of the man leaning forward, breathlessly, from the fringe of pedestrians. The bored look

vanished, and a sudden, brilliant flush swept across her face for a second, and left it tense and paler than before, as she bent forward over the side of the carriage with an indescribably pathetic gesture of recognition.

Brewster had just sense enough left to remain uncovered until they had disappeared; but his own face was white as he turned to a gentlemanly-looking Englishman who stood beside him, and asked, unsteadily, "Can you tell me the name of that lady on the front seat of the carriage which has just passed?"

The Englishman looked with a slow curiosity into the eager, questioning eyes (which he afterwards decided belonged to one of those "aristocracy-worshipers from the other side"). Then good-naturedly, and with a keen relish himself of the titled morsel under his tongue, "Isn't she beautiful?" he said. "Didn't you recognize her? Why, that was Her Serene Highness, Alexandrine, Princess of Saxe-Weisenach and Countess of Hennebourg!"

THE CAPTAIN OF THE
“APHRODITE”

THE CAPTAIN OF THE "APHRODITE"

A STORY OF THE GEORGIA COAST

BY ELMORE ELLIOTT PEAKE

ONE hour after midnight a yawl, rigged with a square sail and containing seven or eight dark figures, moved slowly and silently out of the harbor of Brunswick, Ga. Not a word was spoken or scarcely a movement made until one of the figures, leaning lazily against the side of the boat, with his knees drawn up in front, deliberately lit a cigarette. The yellow flame of the match momentarily revealed a young, refined face, touched with daring and fearlessness. Then all was dark again. "Heave that young fool overboard if he makes another break

like that, and pinch the coal off that coffin tack!" angrily commanded a coarse, suppressed voice from the tiller in the stern.

A heavy man that sat next to the "young fool," and seemed not amenable to the skipper's orders, merely chuckled. None of the others made any move either, while the young smoker calmly puffed away. Thereupon the skipper dipped up a quart cup of salt water and deftly quenched the glowing coal himself, at the same time washing the face and soaking the shirt-front of the smoker. The latter neither moved nor spoke. He quietly tossed the drenched cigarette over his shoulder into the water, drew a gleaming revolver from his pocket, and laid it across his knees; after which he took out a fresh cigarette and leisurely lighted it. The big man at his side again chuckled.

"What's the use of sneakin' out of the harbor at midnight, if you are goin' to run fireworks?" demanded the skipper, in a voice of impotent passion. "When I bargained to haul you two fellows out o' this fever-hole and land you safe and sound in

Savannah, I thought you had some respect for *my* rights. When every railroad train was tied up out o' Brunswick, and you found out that every cow-path into Savannah was shot-gun quarantined, you was glad enough to have me take you."

"You are getting your price," answered the young man, in a low, musical voice, and one could have wagered, from the tone, that he was smiling.

"My price didn't cover gettin' hauled up with a shot across my bows from a revenoo cutter and landed in a pesthouse for ten days, for runnin' in fever refugees," growled the skipper.

"Not *refugees*, Daggett," said the other pleasantly. "*Refugee* implies haste and fright. We leave Brunswick at the command of our chief, quietly and decorously, in the 'Pedro No. 2.' But that is a much more reasonable, a much more gentlemanly, protest than you made before, with that quart cup. If this cigarette jeopardizes our safety, or yours, I will forego the pleasure, though I am dead for a smoke."

"Well, it does," said Daggett, gruff but

mollified. The next moment the cigarette disappeared in the dark water with a faint, instantaneous hiss.

The boat crept along under the light night breeze, taking what is known as the "in-land" course, which lies between the low, marshy mainland on the left, and the long, narrow "sea-islands" on the right, beyond which lies the broad Atlantic. After about an hour it grew darker, the wind freshened, and a misty rain began to powder the boat and its occupants. The skipper, who seemed still in a savage mood, uttered a low, vehement curse at this turn of the weather, and then returned to his dogged silence. The thickening gloom soon blotted out the low headlands by which he was steering; the wind continued to strengthen until the water was sharply slapping the yawl's broad sides; and in less than twenty minutes they were driving furiously along through pitchy blackness, their sail reduced to a mere ribbon.

"A bottle of ink would be lucidity itself compared with this, Markley," said the young fellow to the heavy man next to him.

"I don't see how he steers," returned Markley, who had not chuckled for some time.

"I don't do it with my eyes," said Daggett, with a touch of rough pride.

For half an hour there was silence again, at the end of which time the waves, on which the boat was dancing like a nutshell, had perceptibly increased in violence. So much water was shipped that one man had to bail continuously.

"I didn't suppose it ever got as rough as this on these shallow sounds," observed the young passenger, as an extra heavy wave drenched him to the skin.

"There's lots of things that some people never supposes," commented Daggett, ungraciously.

"Is it often as rough?" asked the other, significantly.

"Not often," growled the skipper.

"Is it *ever* as rough?" he demanded, with distinct suspicion now.

The skipper was silent a moment, and then he answered, with something like a grin in his tones: "Seein' as you seem to

know so much about it, Mr. Hutchinson, I don't mind tellin' you that it *ain't*."

"Which means that we've been blown out to sea?"

"We ain't been blowed in to land."

All night long they tossed on the troubled bosom of the deep, wet and chilled. If a watery grave stared them in the face, no one was unkind enough to speak of the fact. The wind fell about four o'clock, and when the day broke, bright and clear, they were surrounded by a hummocky desert of water, with no land in sight. But less than five miles away lay a long white hull, glistening in the sunlight like a shaft of polished steel. A long trail of smoke lay behind it. All eyes were turned in that direction, and then Daggett ordered the sail hoisted again, that they might be more easily seen.

"She'll see us soon enough, though, I guess," he grumbled. "For if my eyes hain't as useless as two bungholes in one end of a bar'l, that's the revenoo cutter. Still I don't know what in tar she's doin' out here, when she's supposed to be guardin' Savannah agen fever refugees. She sees

us already," he added. "She's puttin' about."

"Revenue cutter or no revenue cutter," said Hutchinson, "not a word about Brunswick, or back they'll dump us into this mudscow. We are working down the coast from Savannah, fishing. Remember that."

"A likely enough yarn, too," said Daggett, with an ironical grin. "We got so much tackle with us."

"We threw it overboard to lighten the boat," retorted Hutchinson.

As the stranger bore swiftly and gracefully down upon them, it soon became apparent, in spite of Daggett's reference to his eyes, that she was not the revenue cutter. She had the appearance, rather, of a private yacht; and when she came to a stop within ten yards of them, this opinion was further strengthened by the trimness and completeness everywhere in evidence. After a short parley between Hutchinson and a uniformed officer who leaned over the polished brass rail—in which Hutchinson accounted for their predicament so adroitly

that Markley winked at Daggett—permission was given them to come aboard.

Hutchinson, the first man up, was barely over the rail when, to his amazement, a couple of stout sailors seized him and quickly encircled his wrists with a pair of cold irons. The rest of the party, as they ascended one by one, met with a similar reception. For a moment even Hutchinson's presence of mind failed him; then, catching sight of Markley's woebegone face, he burst into a ringing laugh.

"Cheer up, old man!" he said. "Our throats are safe, I guess, unless they should attempt to choke us with a double-sized breakfast, which I am in hopes they will. Mr. Mate," turning to the officer with a humorous grin, "if it is not asking too much of a host, would you kindly explain the drift of these hospitalities?"

"I don't think they need much explanation," answered the mate. "If they do, the captain will make it."

He led the way below at once, into a warm, richly furnished saloon, the luxuriousness of which did more, apparently, to

awe Daggett and his rough crew than the irons on their wrists, which they wore with considerable equanimity, if not familiarity.

"Send the captain in, then," said Hutchinson, dropping into a comfortable chair.

"The captain is not up yet," quietly answered the mate, who was a grave man of forty or thereabouts.

"Don't disturb him on our account then," said Hutchinson, with mock humility. "But after he has breakfasted—and smoked—I should like the favor of a short interview. That reminds me that our cook on the yawl got up rather late this morning, too, and he was just skinning our quail when we received your invitation to come aboard."

"You will be fed shortly," said the mate, obstinately refusing to smile, though everybody else was in a broad grin.

At breakfast the handcuffs were removed from the prisoners, and their office was taken up by five natty sailors, armed with carbines. After the meal, which was ridiculously sumptuous for prisoners and to which everybody did ample justice, espe-

cially Daggett's men, they returned to the saloon, where they resumed their irons and were left alone. Hutchinson, who suspected that the arrest might not be entirely unjust, sharply questioned Daggett; but the old man most solemnly declared that it was a "cussed, high-handed, piratin' outrage" on innocent men.

In about an hour the mate appeared again, and announced that the captain would see the leader, whoever he was.

"That's either you or I, Daggett," said Hutchinson, drolly.

"You go," said Daggett, a little uneasily, "You got the gift o' gab in a higher degree than me."

Hutchinson arose, and followed the mate out. In the main saloon, through which they passed, sat half a dozen stylish young women—society girls beyond a doubt—and as many young men. From their curious, expectant faces, they had evidently been awaiting the prisoner's appearance; and a little ripple of excitement swept over them at his gentlemanly and refined aspect. Hutchinson flushed momentarily at their

unexpected presence; then, gaining possession of himself immediately, he passed them with an open, half-mischievous smile, looking them squarely in the eyes. One little woman in an exquisite yachting costume so far forgot herself as to give him back a coquettish glance.

At the captain's room, the mate threw open the polished walnut door, stood aside while Hutchinson entered, and then shut himself outside. At a little roller-top desk sat a well-built, fresh-faced, independent-looking young woman of probably twenty-two, with a most glorious head of dark auburn hair. Over her shirt-waist she wore a tight-fitting jacket of navy blue, of which material her skirt was also made. A cap denoting her rank in gold letters lay on the top of the desk. For a moment she made a pretense of writing, though Hutchinson saw well enough that her steady blue eyes were slightly dilated with excitement.

"I beg your pardon," he began, "but I am looking for the captain. Or, rather, he is looking——"

"I am the captain," interrupted the

young woman haughtily, as if rebuking his easy manner.

The tone nettled him. Without attempting to hide the indignation that kindled in his eyes, he looked at her gravely and steadily, until she stirred uneasily in her chair, and, to hide her embarrassment, pressed back the hair from her brow with a hand very small and white.

"What, have you to say?" she asked forced at last to speak first. Her voice was considerably gentler.

"Nothing," answered he, with dignity. "I am not in the habit of responding to such a contemptuous tone as you have just seen fit to use. If your excuse for it was *these*," holding aloft his irons, "I would call your attention to the fact that they were put there unlawfully and by force, presumably at your order."

Her soft, beautiful eyes filled with surprise, and an added color that might have been the blood of shame crept into her cheeks. "I cannot discuss a point of etiquette with you," she said politely, but with a proper reserve.

"I don't ask that," he returned. "I merely insist on the courtesy due me from a woman of your evident breeding."

Again she looked at him with curious, puzzled eyes. Her humiliation was so evident that he pressed the question no further.

"Would you be kind enough to tell me what you intend to do with us?" he asked.

"I intend to deliver you to the police at Savannah," she said, without flinching.

"On what charge?"

"Don't you know?" she asked, earnestly, looking with something like pain into his clear, ingenuous eyes. Perhaps the depravity that she fancied lurked behind that innocent veil shocked her sensitive woman's nature.

"No more than the man in the moon," he declared.

She lifted a telegram from her desk. "Two days ago, at Cumberland Island, a tender and some hunting and fishing traps were stolen from this yacht. This telegram is from the chief of police at Fernandina. 'Your boat and goods undoubtedly stolen by Seaweed Daggett and gang. They own

sloop "Pedro" and yawl "Pedro No. 2." Have gone back to Georgia waters, out of my jurisdiction. Run them down if you can. If they resist, shoot them. Well-dressed young crook, stranger to us, offered some of your goods for sale here. Is probably with gang now.' " She folded the telegram, and looked at Hutchinson for an answer.

After a moment's thought he asked quietly: "What may I call you?"

"My name is Virginia Powers," she answered.

At the answer he started so perceptibly that she asked curiously: "Is there anything strange about it?"

"No," said he; "but, Miss Powers, I should like to ask you if I look like a 'well dressed young crook'?" He looked her so boldly and confidently in the eyes that she drew back a little with maidenly reserve as she answered:

"You don't look like a liar, either; yet you told my mate you left Savannah yesterday morning in that yawl, when I know, by my own eyes, that it lay at Fernandina at eight o'clock yesterday morning."

Hutchinson flushed, yet not exactly like a guilty man. After studying the carpet a moment—or possibly the toe of the fair captain's little tan shoe—he said: "Miss Powers, this is a strange coincidence. I know your uncle, Jonathan West. I have heard something of his unwillingness for you to go cruising around in a yacht, in this independent manner. I am well acquainted with your cousin, Bartley Hutchinson. I worked with him on the 'San Francisco Examiner.' I saw him off at the station when he came East, ostensibly to visit you. I, perhaps, am the only man who knew that he, from certain reports he had received, regarded you as a coquette; and that his intention, in spite of your uncle's kind invitation to come on to Newport, was to stop off at New York, and secure a position on a paper there—which intention he carried out. He was almost immediately sent South to handle the yellow-fever epidemic at Brunswick."

Miss Powers at first flushed scarlet, but when he finished she was pale. "Believe me," said she, in a voice trembling with indignation, "that I was no party to my

uncle's invitation to Bartley Hutchinson. And at the very hour when he was to arrive at our home in Newport I was a hundred miles away, in this yacht. But I do not see how this concerns you," said she catching herself. "However much I may admire Mr. Hutchinson's bravery in exposing himself to fever, if he would make public such a story as that, about his own cousin, I cannot imagine him a man who is very choice about his associates. I cannot see how this story clears *you*."

"Only this—I am Bartley Hutchinson," said he, laughing.

"It is impossible!" she exclaimed, stiffening.

"No—simply strange," he said, enjoying her discomfiture.

"Then why are you with this band of thieves—for thieves I am confident they are. And why—oh, why did you lie about Savannah?" she asked reproachfully, blushing for him.

"Before I tell you wouldn't it be a little more—cousinly, say, to remove these?" he asked, holding up his manacled hands.

She lifted a key from the desk, and in-

serted it in the lock of one of the bracelets. "But maybe you are not my cousin, after all?" said she, pausing prudently, but half-ashamed of her doubts.

"I should be sorry to think not," said he; and she, flushing a little, set him free.

Briefly, he told her that he and his fellow-correspondent had been ordered home by their superiors, on the almost complete depopulation of Brunswick by flight from the fever. He explained the necessity of leaving clandestinely, in order to escape detention at the first line of quarantine, and pointed out the superiority of the water route over any other.

"I knew Daggett's unsavory reputation," he concluded, "and haven't a doubt that he stole your tender. But it was Daggett or nobody to take us out."

"Then you may be inoculated with yellow-fever germs now," said she, with wide-open eyes.

"Yes."

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Aren't *you*?" he asked.

"I nursed papa until he died with the small-pox," said she, simply. And Bart-

and white as the petal of a lily, she introduced Hutchinson to the party, without mentioning their cousinship, as they had agreed.

All day she stood more or less on her dignity with him, while he quietly studied her and abided his time. He feared once—when she ordered scrubbed a portion of the deck that seemed scarcely to need it—that she was mannish. But when a young sailor smashed his finger under the holystone, and she, instantly forgetting her rank, gave a little cry of sympathy and wrapped the wounded member in her own handkerchief, with her own hands, he took it all back.

He discovered, further, that she was captain in fact as well as in name. The mate clearly respected her seamanship, and cheerfully looked to her for orders. Bartley secretly held him in contempt for this, but that was nothing against Virginia. That she was a little puffed up with her nautical knowledge was undeniable; but she carried it off in such a pretty way—being a woman—that Markley did little else all day but breathe foolish, old-bachelor remarks about her into Bartley's ear.

The wind, which had veered around sharply to the northeast about ten o'clock, strengthened all day long. By four o'clock it was blowing furiously, and the "Aphrodite," whose course held her squarely in the trough of the sea, rose and fell under the foam-crested ridges of water like a porpoise at play. Every square inch of her deck and upper works had been wet thrice over by the flying salt spray, which cut the flesh like whip-lashes. The sailors, in their oilskins and sou-westers, fighting their way forward in the teeth of the gale, streamed with water.

Below, everything was snug and warm. The motion, though, was too violent for the comfort of most of the guests. Captain Powers sat apart from them, with the mate, in her own room, from which she could see what went on outside. She was a little pale from the tension, but perfectly composed. The mate, however, was decidedly nervous—at least so Bartley Hutchinson decided as he entered the room.

"Miss Powers, far be it from me to interfere with the handling of this yacht," said he, "but Daggett, who was born and

raised in these waters, says this is their annual Gulf storm, and that it will continue until twelve or one o'clock to-night, by which time the wind may attain a velocity of eighty miles an hour. If all goes well, we'll be safe at Port Royal long before that; but in this heavy sea the derangement of machinery or steering-gear is more than a possibility. Daggett suggests that you steer for shore, which will give you the wind over your quarter and ease the boat. You can then make Port Royal by the inland course."

"And get aground in those shallows?" asked the mate, sarcastically.

"Daggett says he can put you into the inland course without difficulty, and take you through it," continued Bartley, without vouchsafing the mate a glance, "and, thief that he is, I believe him."

The captain hesitated, and after some talk asked of the mate: "What do you think, Mr. Kennedy?"

"I think that if we always counted on a shaft breaking, we should never put to sea at all."

"Brave talk, Mr. Kennedy," said Hutchinson sharply, "but if a shaft *does* break, how many of these helpless lives will you agree to save? Miss Powers, I most earnestly protest against any foolhardiness in this matter. You have no right to risk either your own life or those of your guests in order to show your courage or the seaworthiness of your craft. Certainly you have no excuse for remaining out here, forty miles from shore, in a blow that is likely to reach a fatal velocity."

"Put about!" said Virginia to the mate. After he had left to execute her order, she said to Bartley: "He thinks you are a coward."

"I *know* he's one," said Bartley stoutly. "He's afraid to be prudent." And he turned on his heel.

Six miles from shore, where the mud from the shallow bottom began to discolor the water, Daggett, after being unironed, took the wheel. Darkness had already set in, and the rain was falling in driving sheets. Reluctant as Hutchinson was to leave his cozy quarters, where he and Mark-

ley were smoking and spinning yarns, he called for an oil-skin and made his way to the wheel-house, after shoving his revolver in an outside pocket. Daggett's loyalty would bear watching.

To his surprise, he found his cousin in the wheel-house, wrapped to the throat, the heavy, moist coils of her hair glistening with drops of rain. She glanced at him inquiringly as he entered, but said nothing; and for some time they stood in silence, listening to the wild roar of the storm.

"Is it necessary for you to stay here and get wet?" he asked finally, in a low tone that Daggett could not overhear.

"Some one has to stay here—he does not understand the signals to the engine-room," said she, in the same guarded tone. "I couldn't be content inside, anyway," she added, less stiffly. "Why are you here?"

Bartley nodded toward Daggett's big bulk. "I have decided to go North from Port Royal," he added after a moment. "You will have to take your prisoners to Savannah, though, to deliver them to the Georgia authorities. I don't know when

we shall meet again, and I may not see you alone again, here on the yacht. I should like to know that I am forgiven before I go. We are cousins, you know." He spoke gravely enough, though there was a whimsical twinkle in his eyes.

"You are making fun of me," said she, with sober prettiness.

"And I should like you to say that you are sorry you ran away from me," he continued, not heeding her complaint, "as I say now I am sorry that I ran away from you."

"Do you suppose I would wait to see a man who boasts that no woman ever yet stirred his pulse?" she asked, indignantly.

He laughed softly, for that had been his idle boast, but only asked: "Do you suppose I would cross a continent to see a woman who boasts that no man has ever been in her presence over fifteen minutes without making something of a fool of himself?"

She flushed a little, and then laughed musingly. "Was *that* the reason?" she asked, in a softer tone, coyly turning her eyes up to his.

"No other," said he. "I can never make *my* boast again," he added, subtly.

"Take care that I can't make mine," she returned warningly, turning her head to glance out on to the tumultuous bosom of the enraged deep. After a moment she went on in a subdued tone: "Cousin Bartley, if you are jesting with me, there is something sacrilegious in it at this moment, when God is displaying His awful majesty in this storm, yet holding us secure, as in the hollow of His hand." She sank down upon the seat, and pulled her wrap a little closer. The act left her white, damp hand exposed, and Bartley laid his own upon it.

"Just to show that I am not jesting, Virginia," said he, seriously.

She let him have his way, and when, after a little, he slipped his fingers under the soft palm and gently tightened his hold, she gave him a little pressure in return.

Meanwhile Daggett was bending at the wheel and straining his eyes out over the black, watery waste. The occasional flashes of lightning, which simply blinded Bartley, were as welcome to him as beacon lights.

Finally, without warning, he threw the wheel heavily to port; and just as the anxious captain sprang to her feet in alarm, he announced, "Inside!" in a tone that betrayed considerable pride in the fact.

The low island behind which they now crept along at one-third speed effectually shielded them from the mighty in-rolling billows of the ocean; but the wind still roared over them like the hoarse bellowing of a thousand angry sea-monsters, and the shallow water of the passage was whipped into a foam. The rain had ceased to fall, and the sky was growing lighter.

Their troubles seemed to be at an end, and Virginia had just drawn a long breath of relief, when a most terrific shock spread over the vessel, throwing both her and Bartley with great violence against the wheel and Daggett.

"Snappin' Turtle Roost!" cried Daggett, aghast, dropping the wheel and turning to them.

"Daggett," said Hutchinson quickly, his hand in his outside pocket and his eyes gleaming dangerously, "if I thought this

was intentional, I'd make a snapping turtle roost out of your skull."

"I've been a-watchin' for it," protested Daggett. "It ought to be more'n four feet above water at this tide, but this wind has drove the water in so it fooled me."

There was no time for dispensing justice. The yacht was rapidly filling from the great hole in her bow. Still the water was scarcely deep enough, Daggett said, to more than wash her hurricane deck when she should have settled to the bottom; consequently, the terrors of a wreck at sea were not present. With it all, though, there was danger, and no time to be lost. Quickly, but coolly, the boats were lowered; the passengers, with what light valuables they could readily pick up, were handed down. The two large boats of the "Aphrodite" were thus loaded, and vanished in the darkness. Then Daggett's yawl was brought alongside. Daggett and four of his men, three of the "Aphrodite's" crew, and the mate, Bartley, and Virginia—all that were left aboard—made ready to descend. Daggett, with a grotesque bow to the captain, requested that his men be unironed, in view of

the possibility of their having yet to swim; and the captain ordered the mate to release them. The smugglers at once tumbled down, followed by the sailors and the mate. Bartley had just taken hold of Virginia's hand to help her down, when he found himself looking into the muzzle of Daggett's heavy revolver. The mate and the sailors, at the same instant, found themselves similarly situated.

"Fall on your faces in the bottom of the boat, and don't move till you're ordered!" commanded Daggett, with a triumphant grin, and his victims discreetly obeyed.

"Are you going to leave us here to drown?" demanded Bartley, as Daggett cut the painter and pushed off.

"You won't drown," said Daggett. "You'll have standing-room until the mate here can get back to you with one o' your boats. If you don't want to wait, there's your tender."

The pair stood still until the night and the storm had swallowed the yawl. If the yacht settled evenly, they would be safe. Yet it might be hours before they were taken off. The island on their right was only

a few rods distant; but it was destitute of any shelter, and the boats had made for the mainland, a mile away. "Are you afraid to go with me in the tender?" asked Bartley.

"No," said she steadily.

Five minutes later the little tender, with its two souls aboard, was dancing over the choppy water. Bartley pulled a fair oar, but in spite of his efforts the frail craft took on water at both bow and stern, and Virginia steadily bailed.

"Can you swim, Virginia?" he asked.

"Yes," said she, without looking up.

She had need of her accomplishment. Three successive waves came combing over the stern drenching her through and through, and then they found themselves in water to their waists. Following Bartley's example, Virginia threw herself over the side, and for a moment they supported themselves by a hand on the gunwale. "They can never hear us call in this wind," gasped Bartley, "and we may chill to death before they find us. The shore can't be very far now. Can you swim for it?"

She bravely answered yes, and they

struck off side by side. He soon saw, though, that her skirts were proving a fatal drag to her. Swimming a little closer, he commanded her to put her arms around him; and she, too weary to think for herself, blindly obeyed. He swam slowly, depending in part upon the wind and waves for propulsion, and reserving his strength for any emergency. With every stroke of his left hand, which was made over her shoulder, as he swam on his side, Virginia's long, wet hair wrapped itself around his hand in clinging strands. But he made no effort to put it out of the way.

At last he felt the tops of rushes. With a good bottom, he could have waded thence, but he felt too tired to "let down" to ascertain whether mud or sand was under them. The chances were it was mud, so he swam on. When dry land was finally reached—though it was far from dry—he was almost too exhausted to lift himself out, and an intense desire to sleep came over him, but he resolutely shook it off.

"Virginia!" said he, for she, too, seemed stricken with the unnatural stupor.

"Yes," she murmured sleepily.

"Wake up, Virginia, wake up!" he called.

She quickly opened her eyes at this, and stared up into his face, startled and bewildered. Then, seeming partly to comprehend their situation, she asked, plaintively: "Where are we, Bartley?"

"Safe and sound, on shore," he answered, blithely.

"And the 'Aphrodite' is gone!" she murmured, with tears in her eyes.

"Not a bit of it! Once she is pumped out and raised, she'll be as good as ever."

"How wicked of me to think of a boat when *we* are safe!" she exclaimed, penitently. "Bartley, you are a noble boy!" she added, fervently. "You saved me."

"What less could a cousin do, Virginia?" he asked smiling, but with glistening eyes.

"And being my cousin, I love you for it, and want to show my gratitude." And she showed it by wrapping her round arms about his neck, and softly kissing him. "I forgive you everything."

Twenty minutes later they were steaming before a blazing fire in the little cabin of a

negro truck-gardener, while the worthy black himself and his two boys were traversing the sedgy shore with lanterns, to find the other boatloads. In less than an hour they were all in, wet and cold, but happy.

As Virginia and Bartley sat side by side in the comfortable seat of a sleeping-car the next day, flying North as fast as steam could carry them, she said: "Bartley Hutchinson, if you were to receive another invitation to come and visit your cousin, do you think you would succeed in seeing her?"

"Yes, I think I should—seeing that her yacht is lying in the mud off Snapping Turtle Roost," he answered, laughing. "Try me."

"I'm afraid you wouldn't feel free to leave me now, in case you didn't like me."

"No, I'm afraid I shan't feel free to leave you, Virginia dear."

Virginia was very, very quiet for several minutes, and then she said softly: "At school I used to write in my copy-book, 'Never trouble trouble, till trouble troubles you.'"



**THE STATE AGAINST ELLS-
WORTH**

THE STATE AGAINST ELLSWORTH

BY WILLIAM R. LIGHTON

FROM the beginning of the career of Brown's Hotel in Marston, each annual volume of its inky and thumb-soiled desk-register had been but a periodical instalment of the long serial story of hard times. And that was a story quite in the modern fashion—a deadly monotonous level of ragged, knotty fact. This level was broken within each year by only two or three little knolls of seasonal activity upon which old Brown could mount from the valley of the shadow of pennilessness into the sunlight of that happy altitude where dollar may be heard to clink against dollar.

The fall term of the district court within and for Phillips County formed one of those rare hummocks of kindly circumstance.

There was also a spring term, but that did not amount to much; for Phillips was an agricultural county, and in May the farmers were too busy to harbor a litigious mood. Before November the year's cropping was well out of the way, and time dragged. There was then a general desire for some gently exhilarating amusement. In a remote farming neighborhood, going to law with one's friends is often the only possible means of adequate diversion. In such cases, litigation does not imply crying need for justice; rather, a need for such agitation of the blood as will prevent its growing stagnant in the veins. The sheriff's summons in a promising legal controversy is as attractive as a gay circus poster.

The November term of 1893 was to be formally opened upon Tuesday. For several preceding days an alien cleanliness had held possession of the old hotel building, to the vast discomfort of its regular corps of boarders "by the week." For the most part, these were railroaders and clerks in the town stores. By reason of the fact that they were fed and lodged cheaply, they were

not considered as entitled to be querulous concerning dirt and dilapidation, which are ever the natural earned increment of cheap poverty. But to the bar of the district, whose members paid day rates, there was due some largess. The bare floor of the bare main room had been scrubbed until it bristled with coarse splinters standing irritably erect. The dingy boxes dispersed plentifully about for the convenience of those who spat had experienced their semi-annual replenishing with fresh sawdust; the battered counter was covered with new oil-cloth; the cigar-case had taken on the rare dignity of two or three full boxes of higher-priced cigars, whose gaudy labels were free of fly-specks. Worthy climax to a noteworthy upheaval, old Brown himself no longer lounged negligently over his outspread arms upon the counter, but was stiffly upright within an armor of starched bosom and rasping collar. His face was changed from its habitual unkempt dullness, and held something of that dynamic quality which pertains to the clean-shaven and the combed. The whole place bore the

appearance of a newly and violently reformed sot.

On Sunday, after the week of unwonted agitation with brush, broom, and mop, the hotel rested in a state of hushed expectancy. On Monday morning, the guests began to arrive from distant towns in the district, and throughout the day there was a cumulative animation. By the time the early night had closed in, the sleepy old building was buzzing deliriously with many voices. The dining-room girls were all in commotion, like hens in a sudden hailstorm; old Brown himself, officiating at the desk, was vainly trying to grasp the situation with mental fingers which were all thumbs. But with a few exceptions, the guests were not capacious; they were well used to the county-seat hotels upon the prairie. Those who had supped were gathering cheerfully in the office; those who were still to sup, while they waited the second call from the dining-room, were empty listeners to the chaffing and bantering of the full.

One topic in particular ran obligato-like over and through and around the multiplic-

ity of themes which made up the medley of conversation. Since the last assembling of court in this county, a new judge had been chosen by the people of the district, and the present term was to constitute his *début*. Lawyers, who have to do with myriad phases of men and affairs, by and by grow a little skeptical of the soundness of popular judgment as expressed at the polls; for public opinion is very fluid, and though it is seen to ebb and flow, the laws of its tides are incalculable. As witness: John Brooke, the new judge, was a Populist, whereas the district had been for more than twenty years unvaryingly Republican. He had been swept into office upon the crest of one of those waves of public sentiment which rolled across the Western prairies in the years not long gone.

He was comparatively unknown, as are most men who rise to prominence in time of critically sudden revolution in politics. He lived in the most obscure and thinly populated county of the district, at its extreme western end. There he had picked up piecemeal his education in letters and in

law, and there he had been admitted to practice hardly ten years before his selection by the new party as its candidate for judicial honors. His had been but an ordinary country practice—rather poorer and more limited than the average, indeed, if campaign tales were to be believed. Because of the poverty of his town and county in large litigation, his routine work as a collector of commercial accounts had been supplemented by desultory employment as a solicitor for insurance and as agent in such occasional real-estate transactions as were made necessary by the shifting interests of a first generation on new soil. When now and then his business brought him in contact with older men in other towns, they got a distinct impression that he was honest—an honesty which most were inclined to attribute to his untried youth rather than to an enduring earnestness of purpose. Such judgment was rendered plausible by experience with Western methods in public life. At the time of his nomination, and while it was undreamed that there was any serious threat in the campaign of the new

party, Brooke had suffered considerable neglect and inattention at the hands of those who were credited with weight of authority in the district politics. But he had taken to the stump himself, and in the course of a month or so the passive smile upon the faces of the leaders of the opposition had given place to a puzzled frown. There was then a belated overhauling of his "record," which was found to be speckless. There was no recourse save to that unfailing weapon of him whose armory is otherwise depleted—that mere burlesque on the art and name of argument—invective. His opponents talked aggressively of Brooke's youthful simplicity, and of his poor equipment in the wiles and artifices which are supposed to be the needful possessions of the office-holder. There were stories told by the Republicans—most of them true—to illustrate his childlike character and freedom from craft. Brooke had not replied to these, but had confined himself in his speeches to a painstaking discussion of public affairs as they had been administered in the past, and as they were to be admin-

istered under the new *régime*. The end justified him. The people appeared to have conceived a sudden passion for candor and simplicity in high places. Perhaps they saw, beneath his mantle of artlessness, a certain large-dimensioned sagacity; perhaps it was only an evidence of the unfailing Western appetite for change; at any rate, they seemed more than willing to take their chances with this man who was dubbed an enthusiastic vagarist, and he had closed his campaign with a substantial majority in every county.

At supper-time, on this Monday night, he had not yet reached Marston, but was due to arrive on a later train. In the interim there was a buzz and whisper of comment, speculation, and prophecy on the part of those who were already assembled. The dominant note in the chorus was a note of doubt.

Judge Stillings had just bought generously of cigars from one of the fresh boxes in the case. One newly lighted, he held in his bearded lips; the others he was bestowing through several pockets. In complex-

ion, beard, and hair he bore the pepper-and-salt aspect of late middle age. In point of virility and in extent of practice he held a leading place at the bar of the district. He had once held the office now to be occupied by Brooke, and, after the American manner, he kept a life interest in the title of Judge. One may surrender the emoluments of the judicial office, but the concomitant dignity is an enduring perquisite. This dignity was eked out in Stillings's case by a habit of silence; the power of tongue was well conserved, while eyes and lips were made to hint large things—a policy which pays substantial dividends to him who has to deal with the innocent and the gullible. Even when among his acuter brethren this habit clung to him. As he listened to the rise and fall of comment concerning Brooke, his face was a study in expression of repressed wisdom. But by and by he spoke:

“You boys are needlessly wrought up. Brooke is all right, let me tell you.”

The hum of converse ebbed toward silence, so that none of Stillings's rare words might be lost.

"He's all right," Stillings repeated. "The success of the Populists doesn't signify any great disaster, in the matter of a judge. Whatever his personal notions, a trial judge isn't an autocrat. Stock-breeders say an occasional crossing of blood is good for the health of a herd; why shouldn't it be so in politics? I'm not very sorry to see it. Brooke is all right—perfectly safe."

There followed a little settling and clarifying of the air, and a silence which was tacitly meant to be filled by further speech from Stillings.

"What if he is young and new?" that worthy questioned. "Every man begins young. Maybe we haven't caught a Solomon, but neither have we got a fool. I think we're in great luck, for my part. He's got a good brain. Of course it isn't filled to the brim yet; but that's a good thing, too. I'm afraid of a trial judge whose head is so full there's no room for anything more. Brooke has one good quality; he's got good clear ideas as to what he calls 'natural justice.' Any lawyer who tries a case before him will have to play fair. If

I had a case with right on my side, no matter how contrary the evidence might be, I'd like to try it before Brooke. I'd be sure of getting all I deserved. That's the way I size him up. I say he's all right."

"But, Judge," some one ventured out of the background of the group, "they say his library has only a dozen or so of text-books, and that he's almighty green on pleading and practice."

"Maybe," Stillings answered shortly. "The books in a man's library don't cut much ice. It's a fact, though; I saw his library myself. It *was* short on the calf-bound, and decidedly long on political economy and—and poetry." Stillings's usually cramped smile widened a little.

"Poetry!" another voice repeated, with an unpleasant accent. "What's that for? I suppose he'll be charging his juries in blank verse, and rendering judgment in hexameter."

"Maybe," Stillings repeated, still more shortly. "Oh, Smith, you're a little raw yourself there. Poetry's all right; there's lots of good hard sense in poetry. And

then, besides, he had a shelf full of philosophy—Greeks—Plato, and Æschylus, and—and—those fellows.” Stillings’s intentions were better than his memory. “I suppose he will be a little shy on pleading and practice—naturally. And we can make it rather unpleasant for him on that score, likely, if we’re a mind to; or we can help him out, if we’re a mind to. For my part, for the credit of the district, I’d like to see things go along smooth. And you listen to this, once more: He’s no fool. Hello, Sheriff; what’s the matter with you? You don’t look happy.”

The sheriff of the county, a big-boned, slouching fellow, had entered hurriedly, and was scanning the faces of the assemblage from under the brim of his wide felt hat. His scrutiny seemed to give him no satisfaction.

“Has anybody seen Jimmy Ellsworth that knows him?” he asked at large. None answered, and he pushed his way to the door of the dining-room, peering about anxiously; then he turned again to the company in the office. “Jimmy said he’d come

in to-day," he drawled; "but I ain't saw him. It ain't like Jimmy to go back on his word. Durn me! I'm too plague-taked easy with these fellers. I'm goin' to quit it; hear me?"

A smile lay upon several faces—faces of those who knew the big sheriff and his foibles.

"Jimmy's always kep' his word with me," the officer complained. "He's a good feller. But of course this is different: There wa'n't no fit place to put a clean man in the jail. Jail ain't just to say air-tight, nohow. An', then, Jimmy said he had corn an' such to be looked after, so I let him go home. He said he'd come in to-day, sure. Be just my durned luck if he'd skipped out. Like's not he's in Injun Territory by now. I ought to knowed better. Then where'll I be?"

A laugh stirred the group of listeners, and some one spoke: "Why, Billy, you are in a box, ain't you? Of course he's skipped. Wasn't he under bond?"

"Bond!" the perturbed officer answered. "No, he wasn't. He couldn't give none.

I ought to kep' him, I reckon; but darn my fool heart, I thought I knowed him well enough. Besides, he'd been good friends to me out in Wells precinct."

The ripple of laughter rose to a cresting wave. This was no new thing in the conduct of the sheriff's office.

There was a commotion on the wide porch at the front of the hotel—many steps and the bumping of heavy baggage. The door was pushed open, and there entered the big negro who was general factotum about the place, bending under the weight of a trunk set upon his shoulders, and followed by several new guests. The first of these was a man of apparently thirty years, bronzed by sun and weather, poorly clad, but rugged and ruddy, as becomes one whose craft is with the plow. At sight of this man the sheriff's face cleared.

"Well, thank the Lord, Jimmy!" he cried, and shook hands cordially

"Think I wasn't coming?" the other laughed lightly. "I said I'd be here, didn't I?" Then these two passed from general attention, to make way for one who

had followed in Ellsworth's steps, and whom Stillings greeted with warmth:

"Judge, I'm glad to see you—glad to be the first to shake your hand and say good luck to you."

There was a stir in the company, and a pushing forward with eager outstretching of hands, to the forgetting of everything but the desire to be conciliatory. That is an American trick, and not altogether Western.

Presented to the eye, Judge Brooke gave promise of fulfilment of Stillings's assurance that he was "no fool." He was tall and well knit, with a smooth-shaven face, and apparently not much beyond his thirty-fifth year. But for his size and muscular strength he would have appeared much younger, so clear were his eyes, so fresh his complexion. There was an undeniable masculine quality in his bearing; his lips were restrained, almost grim, and evidently sealed against trivialities. Clearly the fret of light circumstances could not stir him to an active eruption of words; it must be a fact or a thought of large force that could

move his square jaw. Now, as he met the crowding lawyers and acknowledged their well-wishing, it was with perfect calmness and an uncompromising dignity, though it was plain that he was not in the least artificially stiffened by the new title. He bore himself like a man.

"We shall be thrown much together for a few years," he said to the attentive group. "Probably you are as anxious as I that everything shall move pleasantly, so far as our personal relations are concerned. I shall try to do my part to that end. Some of you are strangers to me; but that is not to continue. We may have antagonistic ideas in politics, but I hope that may signify nothing. I shall not regard politics; I shall not consider that I owe any debt to any particular political party, as in the campaign I have tried to forget that I was the candidate of one party, and not of the whole people. I have no doubt that we shall get along very well together. Landlord, am I too late for supper?"

Judge Brooke arose early on the crisp morning following, and had his breakfast

almost alone; then he went for a long walk through the town. When he returned to the hotel, there was still a half-hour before the time set for the opening of court, and the lawyers were lingering in the dining-room. After his exhilarating exercise in the free air, Brooke found the overheated office oppressive, and he remained upon the wide porch, pacing back and forth. There he found one apparently like-minded to himself—the man Ellsworth, who had on the preceding night surrendered himself to the custody of the sheriff, and who now sat upon a long bench without the door. To him Judge Brooke spoke casually:

“You were on the train with me last night coming up, weren’t you? On jury service, are you?”

Ellsworth grinned appreciatively. “No,” he said frankly. “It’s worse than that. I’m a subject for a jury. I reckon I’ll be arraigned to-day.”

Brooke’s brow contracted as he looked keenly into the smiling face. It was a good face—such a face as men like to look upon in their fellows. It was entirely free of that

element of doggedness and sly concealment which we are used to expect in the face of one even charged with crime. His eyes were especially good, large and clear, almost limpid, like a child's. The face comported very well with the tone of the confession; but the substance of that confession made a sad puzzle.

"How's that?" Brooke asked. "Arraigned? You don't mean that—on a criminal charge?"

Ellsworth nodded, his grin persistent. "Grand larceny," he said with a deliberate accent, as though the words had a not unpleasant flavor. Brooke stood for a moment, his hands clasped at his back.

"Well," he said at last; "I don't understand this. I suppose I have no right to ask questions; I shall find out by and by, no doubt."

"Oh, that's all right," Ellsworth answered. "I'm not squeamish about it. It's grand larceny all right enough. Yes, you'll hear about it later, I reckon."

By ones and twos and threes the lawyers were filing out of the hotel, buttoning about

them their overcoats, whose pockets bulged ominously with papers. In a straggling procession, judge, bar, and hangers-on moved up the street toward the ramshackle frame building where were the county offices and whose upper story held the courtroom.

The ceremonies of the opening of term went forward quite as at other times, with dreary calling of the docket, assignment of cases for trial, and such other matters as attend the awakening of Justice from a doze. The criminal cases were first assigned, after ancient usage; two or three petty offenders were there, and also the man Ellsworth, who lounged within the bar, an interested onlooker at the turning of wheels in the great machine into whose hopper he was soon to pass.

Brooke comported himself in a way to make sleepy eyes open and slow heads buzz. Stillings was soon smiling broadly. Never had there been in this district such incisiveness, such an unexcusing celerity in the despatch of business. Brooke's eyes, alight with the vigor of youth, seemed to have an

unwontedly clear insight; facts, principles, precedents he held with a firm grasp. In the afternoon of the second day he called the case of the State against Ellsworth. Ellsworth dropped the legs of his up-tilted chair to the floor, and stood before the judge's desk.

"So you are Ellsworth, are you?" Brooke asked. "You are bound over to this court on a charge of grand larceny. Have you counsel? Have you a lawyer?"

"No," Ellsworth answered slowly. "I didn't have any before the justice; I ain't got any here. I don't know as I need him."

"Yes; you'll need counsel," Brooke persisted. "It wouldn't be fair to you to proceed without giving you the benefit of advice from some one who knows the law."

"Oh, I don't know," Ellsworth said. "All I want is a fair show. I reckon I'd get that without a lawyer. I'm satisfied." He did not appear at all chagrined or dismayed. There was nothing flippant in his attitude; he bore himself with a respectful regard for the dignity of the court; his non-

chalance seemed to be wholly on his own account.

"No," the judge said; "that won't do. Can you afford to pay a lawyer?"

"Well, no; I can't," the prisoner replied, a little reluctantly. "I don't own anything. I rented a little piece of land this summer—run it on shares. I had a fair crop, and I've sold my share. But I've—I've blowed the money I got for it. I haven't got any left."

Judge Brooke glanced about the courtroom. "Does any one know this man personally?" he asked. The big sheriff was upon his feet.

"I know him, Judge," he said. "I've knowed him a good while—ever since my first term."

"Well, what about him?" Brooke asked. "Do you know his circumstances?"

"He's told his circumstances fair as I could. He's told it just as it is. Jimmy ain't got nothin'."

"Very well. Under such conditions, Ellsworth, I have authority to appoint counsel for you, at the cost of the county. Are you acquainted with any lawyer here? Is there any one you'd prefer?"

Ellsworth turned to face the many lawyers sitting around the tables and against the rail. "I ain't particular," he said. "Suit yourself, Judge, and I'm satisfied."

"Judge Stillings," Brooke said abruptly, "I shall appoint you to defend this man, if you care to assume the case."

Then came a whispered consultation between attorney and client; then the arraignment, the perfunctory plea of "not guilty," and the droning work of empaneling a jury. That done, the case proceeded uneventfully. Three or four witnesses for the State gave a succinct story of the crime. In the preceding summer Ellsworth, while in the employ of a large farmer in the county, had been several times entrusted with charge of carloads of fattened cattle shipped to the nearest stock-yards market. He was accounted a good man at this work. His employer had reposed such confidence in his integrity, and was himself so easy-going, that he had not held Ellsworth to a strict accounting with vouchers and bills of sale. By and by he had discovered, quite by accident, that Ellsworth had been guilty of a substantial peculation on one of his trips.

With his faith shaken, he had preferred the charge for which Ellsworth was on trial. That was all. The proof was clear and direct—so undeniable that Stillings did not much concern himself with cross-examination of the witnesses. In an hour's time the State had rested its case. Then came another whispered consultation, and Stillings arose.

"May it please the Court," he said, in his professional manner, "with this evidence before the Court and jury, the defense wishes to withdraw the plea of not guilty, and to enter instead a plea of guilty. But in that connection the prisoner wishes to make a statement to the Court in his own behalf."

Judge Brooke leaned forward upon his dingy desk, knitting his brows, looking intently into Ellsworth's unabashed eyes. He briefly instructed the jury, then took up his pen and wrote an entry, upon his docket, which he read aloud. The jurors were discharged.

"Well," the judge said interrogatively, "what does the prisoner wish to say?"

Ellsworth arose in his place. "Only a little, Judge," he said. "I haven't got nothing to say about the evidence; it's been straight enough—all true, just like it happened. I did knock down some money that wasn't mine—about a hundred and fifty. I done it because I needed it. I thought I needed it—thought I couldn't get along without it. I reckon that's where I missed my cue; I reckon I'd been a heap better off if I'd let it alone. But I didn't seem to be satisfied to have it that way. I reckon that don't matter much now. But I'd like to say a word about something else. You've heard what Mr. Burton, him that I stole from, said about my good character before this. I had it, too, Judge; nobody that knows me can say anything about me but just this one thing; I had a good character. I ain't beggin' off, understand; I'm here to take my medicine, like I deserve; but I'd like to have my time in the pen made as short as you can make it. I paid back the money to Burton, just a couple of weeks ago, that I stole. He'll tell you so. So he ain't out anything. That's what I done

with the money I got out of my corn. That's why I didn't have any to pay a lawyer with. I paid him every last cent, with interest on top. And besides that, I've paid in other ways for my stealin', a hundred times over. If I lived a thousand years, I couldn't steal no more. That's all I wanted to say. I hope you can make my time short. I've got some use for myself now outside the pen. I've just found that out, since I done this stealin'."

His eyes had not dropped while he spoke; he had met Brooke's scrutiny fearlessly. Now that he had finished, he waited in respectful attention.

"Ellsworth," Brooke said in a moment, "have you told me everything? I should like to hear the whole story."

For the first time the prisoner was visibly embarrassed. A flush crept up, flooding his cheeks, mounting to the very roots of his hair; his glance fell, and his fingers worked nervously upon the brim of his old hat, which he held before him. Then he laughed shamefacedly.

"Well, no, Judge, I haven't told it all. I haven't kept anything back about the steal-



in', though. But there—there is something else. It don't make no difference, though, to anybody but me; it don't make my stealin' any blacker or any whiter. You'd see that, if I was to tell you. But I'd rather not—not here, anyhow."

Brooke's eyes sought the clock upon the court-room wall, whose hands indicated the hour of adjournment. "Mr. Sheriff," he said, "adjourn court until to-morrow morning at nine o'clock." Then he came down from the bench and stood at Ellsworth's side, motioning that Judge Stillings should join them. "I want you two to eat supper at my table to-night," he said. "I want to talk with you a little further—that is, Ellsworth, if you don't mind telling me the whole story privately, in the presence of your counsel."

Ellsworth's cheeks still bore a remnant of their flush, but he was no longer agitated. "Why, sure!" he said heartily. "It's nothing I'm ashamed of, except before so many folks, lawyers and such, that wouldn't be likely to understand. You will, maybe; I'll tell you, anyway."

As they went down the street, he walked



between judge and lawyer. He began to speak at once when they were in the open air, out of hearing of the court-room throng. His speech was directed mainly to Brooke, but now and then he turned a smiling glance upon Stillings's immobile face.

"It's this way, Judge. There's a girl in it. I've heard folks say when a man goes wrong he most generally makes out like it was some girl put him up to it. But that ain't what I mean. My girl she's a different sort. But then it was thinking about her that made me take old Burton's money. Burton's got a big ranch up country a piece—maybe you know him?—and he keeps a lot of folks about the place. This girl I'm tellin' you about, she cooked for the men. That's how I come to know her. I've known her for two years; but we took to each other so natural, seems like I've known her ever since I was born. I don't know; maybe that's the way with everybody when he takes a shine to a girl. This was the first time it ever happened to me."

"Well?" Brooke questioned, when Ellsworth lapsed into a thoughtful silence. "Was she a good girl?"

Ellsworth stood still, lifting his hat with a little gesture of reverence. "Good!" he echoed. "Good!" He walked on again, but with slower steps. His manner of complacency had died down within him; his eyes were very serious, overcast by the shadows of strong thought and feeling. "Judge, she's an angel, that's what she is—an angel in a blue gingham apron, messin' around in a kitchen. That's what made me hot. The other fellows didn't see what she was. The way some men look at it, all girls is just alike; they can't see no difference. But I did have just enough sense to see that she was different, and I thought when she got to be my wife I'd like to have her keep on being different. I was getting thirty dollars a month on the ranch, besides board. There was no chance of getting any more; that was the most that Burton paid anybody, only the foreman. Thirty dollars a month don't go very far with a man and a woman, let alone children. I've always thought I'd like a big mess of children, if ever I had a home of my own. I never could manage money, anyway. And anyhow, I'd seen too much of women crowding along on a little

pinch of money with a big family. My mother she worked herself into an old woman, doing for us boys when we was half-grown cubs; and then afterward she died because there wasn't money enough to get things when she needed 'em. That's stuck in my craw ever since. I was bound my wife shouldn't have that happen to her. I was thinking about getting married pretty soon. I couldn't wait—I thought I couldn't. You know how a man is about such things. So, fool-like, I just set to work to find some other way of getting what I couldn't get honest. It was easy enough to find the way. That's how I come to steal from Burton."

They had reached the hotel, and had paused for a moment upon the wide porch, so that Ellsworth might conclude his brief speech. Brooke led the way to the dining room and to his own table in a secluded corner, where the three sat down and ordered their supper.

"Ellsworth," Brooke said, while they waited for their order to be filled, "do you think that was sufficient reason for your act?"

"No, I don't," Ellsworth answered brusquely. "I've said so, ain't I? I've said I'd seen my blunder. I've seen it good and plenty. What I can't see now is what ever made me do it. Seems like a man must be a good deal of a natural-born fool to just shut his eyes and run into a thing like this. He's got to have his head bumped a few times before he gets wise; seems that way with me, anyhow. Martha—Martha's *her* name—it's Martha that bumped my head for me. I'd give half my life, willing, for a chance to take back this year." His cheeks were blanched and his voice tense with passionate feeling. His fingers were clutched together so that the nails were purple. "But what's the use? I reckon that's the way a man's bound to feel, though. I don't know as I've got any right to kick."

There followed a silence, while the waitress brought and distributed the trayful of small dishes holding their supper. When she had gone, Brooke asked gently: "And has the girl thrown you over now?"

Ellsworth looked with sharp surprise at his questioner. "Who? Martha? No, she ain't. You don't seem to understand

what sort of a girl she is. No, Sir! She's hung to me like sheep stay with an old bell-wether. That's what makes me nervous. She's been—there ain't no telling what that girl ain't said and done. She's made me stay awake nights and think, and that's more than anything or anybody ever did before since I was born. It was her that made me take that piece of land on the shares this summer, so I could pay back the money to old Burton. I had to furnish my own seed corn, and she helped me buy it. What do you think of that? Say, I've wished a dozen times this last six months that she *would* drop me—no, I ain't either; but I've felt pretty near like wishing it. A good woman can make a man feel so danged uneasy. Oh, Judge, you don't know that girl! Why, I'd about made up my mind once or twice to run away, after the sheriff let me go, and get rid of the whole business; but she wouldn't have it. She said I'd got to be a man. Let me tell you: she come down to the train night before last with me, to see me off; that's what she did, and she told me then I'd got to be a man if

she was to have anything more to do with me. She said she could wait while I was takin' my medicine. How does that strike you?"

He had laid aside knife and fork, and was leaning forward with his elbows upon the table, his supper quite forgotten in the ecstasy of his speech. "Quit me! Well, I should say not!"

Brooke, too, had lost interest in the supper; but Stillings was giving stolid attention to his beefsteak and fried potatoes. There seemed to be no need for professional intervention. Brooke's thoughts were much engaged. It was evident that Ellsworth's exuberant speech was an apotheosis of the woman, rather than an excuse or justification of himself; he seemed to have lost sight of himself altogether, save as he made the merest lay-figure for the exercise of Martha's surpassing sturdy virtues. Such a man does not plead for himself.

"So, you see," he continued, "that's why I'm anxious. If it was only me I wouldn't care—not so much, anyway; but now seems like I've got to care. I want to show her

that she ain't trusted me for nothing. I want to make it all right with Martha."

Brooke's foot sought Stillings's broad toes beneath the table, and gave to them a gentle pressure of inquiry. A barely perceptible nod was Stillings's answer. Stillings was not inattentive.

"But do you feel sure of yourself, Ellsworth?" Brooke asked. "You mustn't think only of the woman's power over you. In a matter like this a man must, after all, rely chiefly upon himself. He doesn't want some one to lean upon; he must learn to stand alone. You have to think of that."

"Yes, I know—I have," Ellsworth answered. "I've spent lots of time this summer thinking over the whole business. There ain't many men that are any good at standing alone or walking straight by themselves. I don't suppose I could do it—I don't suppose I would if I could, unless I had somebody else to think about besides myself. This is the way I've figured it out: A man—just a common man, like me—most generally ain't ambitious to amount to much just for the sake of being proud of

himself. I never cared. I never thought about it, one way or the other. I reckon the reason I never stole before this time was because I never thought about it. But it's different when the man's got a woman to think about—if she's any good. Why, it looks to me now like as if, when a man loves a real good woman, he's going to be just as good as she makes him be. Ain't that reasonable? If she won't put up with anything else—if she says, like Martha said to me, 'See here, Jimmy, you've got to be a man!' why then he's going to do it. Same as if she was sittin' on the top rail of a high fence, and she says to him, 'Come up here and set beside me'—won't he climb up? You bet he will. But if she wasn't there, that top rail wouldn't draw him, not by itself. Oh, I've thought about it, a heap!"

Brooke's fine face was all alight under the contagion of Ellsworth's virile enthusiasm. It was good to look upon his face when it had come out from the shelter of its usual placid repose. He got to his feet; the others also arose.

"You two will be in the court-room at

nine in the morning," he said. "I shall think of the matter overnight and attend to the sentence at once when court is opened. There is nothing else on the criminal docket."

When court had been convened for the next day and the clerk had droned through with the reading of the journal, Judge Brooke spoke directly: "In the matter of the State against Ellsworth. The prisoner has pleaded guilty to the charge of grand larceny, and is now before the court for sentence. The passing of sentence in such cases has heretofore been a very simple matter in this district. But I have found this case to present some difficulties. I have talked with the prisoner and his counsel; I have gone to the bottom of the matter, I think. In this course I have been moved by a desire to do justice to both prisoner and people.

"Our criminal code has been enacted by the social body for a selfish end—its own safety. Its apparent purpose is not to secure immunity from crime, but to secure

protection against the criminal. It may be said that that is the only province of positive law, and that the finer ethics of the matter lie within the domain of social or political science. I am not so sure that the two are so sharply separable; I am not so sure that ethics should not play a large part in the administration of even the strictest possible code of positive laws. As it is, any act which falls within a certain classified and arbitrary list is forthwith named an offense against the State. But little attention is given to the motive underlying the act. Nor is the good of the criminal himself taken largely into consideration in administering penalties, save upon the theory that to punish him by restricting his liberty will give him time and opportunity for turning penitent. The accepted doctrine seems to be that he who has done any one of these things is of necessity by temperament and nature an enemy of his brothers.

"In my judgment, that polity is not broad enough—not elastic enough. It aims at crushing out effects, not at the alleviation of causes. The prisoner himself has rights—

rights far beyond the mere matter of securing a hearing by an impartial jury and beyond the admission of evidence according to established usage. He has the right to have his motive considered. I think it should be the business of the courts to inquire as fully as possible into the motives which foreshadow the acts complained of; and in meting punishment for those acts a court should seek to avoid the danger of spoiling a potentially useful citizen. That is a duty he owes to the people, as well as to the accused man. I know of no prohibition upon such course, if a court wishes to take the time for it. It seems to me that in such matters the greatest safety of society lies, not in the arbitrary authority of the court, but in its discretionary power. The court as the instrument of the law is not an avenging Nemesis. The law is impersonal, and incapable of cherishing or executing vengeance; it is a dispassionate agency for securing the greatest possible good of the social body, and it must not lose sight of the fact that the accused man is himself an integral part of that body.

"In the case at bar, I think I have gotten a clear understanding of the man and his motive. The act of theft was only a very badly distorted shadow of the motive. The prisoner has himself seen this. Mr. Ellsworth, stand up. In view of all the circumstances in your case, I shall sentence you to six months in the county jail of this county, and I shall suspend execution of the sentence until the first day of the May term of next year. In the meantime, you are to be at liberty within the county. I shall expect you to look carefully after your conduct and to report to me here upon the first day of the next term."

He paused, and took up his pen to enter the sentence. An inarticulate buzz arose in the room, and the heads of the lawyers were bent together for whispered comment. One man touched the impassive Stillings upon the arm.

"Is that Populism, poetry, or Greek philosophy?" he questioned hoarsely, "or has he found out that Ellsworth voted for him?" But Stillings settled himself in his chair without reply.

When the entry was written, Brooke looked up from the page. He had heard the voiceless murmur, but his manner was fearless and unperturbed. Ellsworth still stood before the bench, his eyes wide with question, his lips parted for speech that would not be formed. Another man was also upon his feet, just without the bar-rail. This was Burton, the prosecuting witness against Ellsworth. He was a big man, heavy-limbed, with thick neck, florid face, and a fringe of red beard. He wore a heavy overcoat of sheepskin, which made his bulk appear portentous. When he caught Brooke's eye, he raised his hand like a schoolboy.

"Judge," he said, in his deep, out-door voice, "Judge, I want to say a word if you'll let me."

As Brooke waited, Burton made his elephantine way through the crowd until he stood at Ellsworth's side. He laid his heavy hand upon the prisoner's shoulder, keeping it there while he spoke:

"Judge, you're right about this business. I ain't been easy in my mind lately—well,

not since I filed the complaint, but 'specially since I've come down here to court and had time to think it over. I think you're right about what you said, Judge. It does look too bad to spoil a good man, to send him to the pen for just this one thing. I s'pose I'm to blame. I'm apt to be quick. Ellsworth had been a good man about the place, always straight as a string. It kind of disappointed me to find what he'd done; but I s'pose I hadn't any right to be so quick about it. I might've saved lots of trouble all around; I might've spoke to him myself. That would've made things all right. Now, if he ain't to go to jail before May, I want to take him back with me on the place. I want to give him another show. We'll both give each other another show, if that's satisfactory, Judge?"

Brooke's unbending glance read the old man's face, with its breadth of ruddy honesty. He spoke quietly: "That is a matter with which the Court has nothing to do, Mr. Burton. Personally, however, I should be glad to have you give this man an opportunity for employing himself during the win-

ter. He will need to be kept occupied. That's all, Ellsworth; you may go. That, gentlemen, concludes our work on the criminal docket. We will proceed with the civil cases."

In the following April, Brooke returned for a day to Marston. Since the close of the term, months before, he had not concerned himself with thought of Ellsworth; for he was by habit a busy man, and he was content to allow Ellsworth to work out his own salvation. But on this morning, as he walked up the street toward the hotel, the force of association brought to his mind a vague wonder as to how matters were going with that ingenuous ward of the law. In the next moment he saw Ellsworth. He was standing before the window of a house-furnishing shop, looking in, and by his side was a woman. Brooke slackened his quick pace, and turned aside. As he approached, Ellsworth was speaking earnestly to his companion:

"We can do it easy, Martha. That's to be for your room, and I don't want nothing cheap for you. You listen to me, girl; there

ain't nothing that's too good for you. You make me keep sayin' that every minute. I'm glad you do, though—it's fun to say it. But there's no use of your kicking; it won't do no good. My head's set. Come on; let's go in and see what else they've got." As he turned, he caught Brooke's smiling glance, and he blushed a sudden fiery red; then with an impulsive gesture he lifted the woman's unresisting hand to lay it in that of the judge, outstretched.

"Judge, this is Her," he said, with the tone of one who utters a sacred name.

The woman did not speak, but stood holding Brooke's hand in both her own with a straining pressure, and her eyes were fixed upon his with the eager gaze of one who looks for something not yet revealed. As he regarded the calm, strong face, full of the purity and power of good womanhood, Brooke got understanding and knew that Ellsworth was safe. Quick tears suffused the woman's eyes, and she turned away to the window.

"Well, Ellsworth," Brooke said genially, "how does it go with you?"

"You don't need to ask me that," Ells-

worth answered soberly. "Don't you see I'm with Her? There ain't nothing wrong with me."

Brooke hesitated for a moment with a question hanging upon his tongue—a question which he did not like to form in words; and there proved to be no need for that.

"We ain't married," Ellsworth said simply. "Not yet. I wouldn't do that, not in a hundred years, not while things is this way. But I don't mind sayin' we're looking around a little, like you see us this morning. And we've got a place picked out that's for rent up near the ranch. Say, you remember Burton; of course you do! Well, sir, Burton he's been like what a man's daddy might be to him—there ain't nothing he don't want to do for us two, if we'd let him. But we won't. We're going to pole our own skiff, right from the start, without no help from anybody. That's Martha's notion; and of course, then, it's mine too. We're going to start just plain and easy, when we do start, by and by. Only Burton's lent me a plow and a team for a while, and I've got most of my land broke. Only thing that worries me sometimes, nights,

when I'm alone—somehow I don't think of it much when I'm with Martha—is that maybe I'm getting too brash about what's going to happen next term. Maybe—I don' know—” He dropped into silence, as though his thoughts led where speech hardly dared to follow. Brooke laughed.

“Go ahead, Ellsworth,” he said gayly. “You're all right.”

OTTENHAUSEN'S COUP

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BY JOHN WALKER HARRINGTON

OTTENHAUSEN was the new chemist. His hair was long, and his collars were of the turned-down variety. He read Goethe, and played the violin. He had seen life in German universities, on the plains of Texas, and at many other places.

The evening that he arrived at the furnace to take his position as official analyzer of ores and limestone, he found the household of the superintendent in a high state of excitement. Mrs. James Hunt, the wife of the broad-shouldered young man who conducted the affairs of Laird's Furnace for the Mingo Coal and Iron Company, said, "You have just come in time for the house party to-morrow evening. You must not forget that to-morrow afternoon you are to

ride up to the charcoal-burner's place on the hill. Three young women friends of mine from Columbus are going to be there to spend the day. I told them about you, and they are just dying to meet you. Your fame has traveled before you."

Ottenhausen said that he would be charmed. He bestowed his belongings in the little room back of the company's office which was to be his temporary home. When the festivities were over he was to take up his abode in "Eagle's Nest," as the house was called where dwelt the superintendent and his wife.

Laird's Furnace was not an inviting place. Eagle's Nest, the colonial mansion on the heights, with its gleaming white pillars and its setting of green lawn, was the only redeeming feature. Down in the valley was the great furnace, from which issued a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. Grouped around it were the lean-to shanties and the story-and-a-half cottages where dwelt the furnace hands and the miners of iron ore.

"Not a garden of the Lord," remarked

Ottenhausen, as he stood at the door of his laboratory the afternoon after his arrival; "but it might be worse."

"Am you the new chemist, boss?" came a voice close to the young German's elbow.

Ottenhausen turned, and saw a portly negro who held a bridle to the end of which was attached as sorry a looking mule as he had ever seen.

"Missus Hunt dun sent this muel foh you to ride to the charcoal-burner's shanty, sah," said the negro. "He am already saddled."

"But I don't know the road," interposed Ottenhausen.

"Doan't you fret yerself, boss," replied the ebon groom. "Jackson he know the way in the dark."

Ottenhausen left the mule tied to the hitching-post, and went to his quarters in the office building. He dug up from the bottom of his steamer trunk riding-breeches, a coat, and a pair of remarkably varnished boots. He had served in the German cavalry, and the boots were a relic of days which were gone. He was a commanding

figure as he walked out of the office that September afternoon. The men in the cast-house, who with great sledges were breaking up the barely cooled pig iron, stopped to look at the tall figure in unusual garb.

"One of them dudes from Columbus, I suppose," growled Cornwall Jim, as he swung a warm bar upon the little tram-car. "We poor devils have to grub in the dirt so that the super and his fine lady can live on the fat of the land and bid a lot of city folk to come down here and enjoy themselves.

"Well," muttered Jim Johnson, of the Red-Ox group of anarchists, "this sort of thing can't go on forever. Men, the only way to bring them rich to terms is to destroy property. Understand?" Johnson had only been at the furnace two weeks. He had already become something of a leader. He had hardly been employed in the cast house three days before there came rumors of a strike.

Ottenhausen mounted the sorry-looking mule, pointed him north by east, and gave him free rein. The animal trotted past the

furnace, and of his own accord took to a winding wagon track. Half an hour later Ottenhausen came in sight of the covered mounds of smouldering wood and the hut of the charcoal-burner. Before the door of the house the road forked. The mule trotted along peaceably until he got to the parting of the ways. Ottenhausen gave the bridle a quick jerk to the left. He caught a glimpse, as he did so, of Mrs. Hunt and three young women standing before the door of the weather-beaten hut.

Jackson, the most stubborn of all mules, had always been ridden by but one road, and that one was to the right. The moment he felt the twitch upon the bridle he turned squarely around, and with a quick movement threw his rider over his head. Ottenhausen struck upon the arm which he had raised to acknowledge the bow of Mrs. Hunt, and rolled over and over upon the ground. He saw the hut, the sky, and the trees in a confused whirl. He sat up, and looked in a dazed way towards the shanty. Upon his face lingered a remnant of a smile. He struggled to his feet, and shook him-

self. A cloud of dust rose from his clothing. He saw four women, with their faces buried in their hands, sitting on the bench in front of the little building. They were shrieking with laughter. A girl with dark hair and blue eyes rose to her feet, and advanced towards Ottenhausen.

"I hope you are not hurt," she said.

Then she abruptly turned away, grasped a sapling, and laughed until the echo could be heard down the glen. Ottenhausen deigned no reply. He gathered up his battered hat, through which Jackson had put one of his hoofs, and strode angrily down the path by which he had come. Nearly a quarter of a mile ahead he saw that disreputable mule cantering slowly along and stopping occasionally to crop the herbage by the way. With flushed face, battered headgear, and clothing all awry, the new chemist tramped two miles along the stony and dusty road, and an hour later reached the office of Laird's Furnace. James Hunt, superintendent, looked at Ottenhausen a moment, smote the big desk before him, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"I see no cause for merriment," said Ottenhausen, with a look in his eyes which caused the big superintendent to stop short.

"Excuse me, old man," replied Hunt, "but I can't help it. I started to warn you when I saw you setting off on that old beast, but I was too late."

"You will present my compliments to Mrs. Hunt," said Ottenhausen, "and say to her that, on account of circumstances over which I had no control, I cannot come this evening."

No amount of persuasion could induce the chemist to change his mind.

"Well," said the superintendent at length, "if you won't come up to the house, would you mind looking after the eleven o'clock cast to-night? I don't mind telling you that in the midst of all this gaiety I am a little bit worried. There is something queer about the way the men are acting these days. The furnace needs watching. We've got a pretty tough gang here. Don't take any nonsense from them."

Ottenhausen said he would not have the

least objection. He lighted a cigar after supper, and in the gathering dusk walked leisurely towards the furnace. He heard the whir of wheels. He stepped aside, and a light buckboard rattled past. The bell of the furnace was lowered at the moment, and by the light of the burning gas from the tall tower Ottenhausen saw that the occupants of the wagon were Mrs. Hunt and her charges. The wife of the superintendent had gone to the little station to meet some of her guests who had arrived by train. Ottenhausen had stepped back in the shadow of a rail fence, and the young women did not recognize him.

"Did you ever see anything so ridiculous?" said one of the girls.

"I don't care," came another voice, and it had the same silvery tone as that of the girl who had asked about the young chemist's welfare that afternoon. "I suppose he'll think that I'm awful, but I couldn't help laughing. He's rather handsome, too, isn't he?"

Ottenhausen, walking towards the fur-

nace, saw in his mind's eye a girl clinging to a sapling; her laughing face was framed in dark hair.

"It was ludicrous," he mused; "I didn't think it was very funny at the time. I begin to wish that I had stuck it out and gone to the party, anyway."

His reverie was suddenly cut short. He heard a whizzing sound close to his ear; something hard struck the ground within a few inches of his feet, and sent bits of cinder flying. He stopped, looked down and saw a piece of iron ore as big as his fist. He glanced around him. The night gang had just come on.

"According to the theory of projectiles," remarked Ottenhausen, "that missile must have come from some considerable height."

He heard the top-filler on the tunnel-head pouring a new charge into the furnace. Three minutes later the man felt a hand upon his shoulder.

"What do you mean?" demanded Ottenhausen. "Trying to kill me, were you? If I were certain that you threw that iron ore, I'd break every bone in your body."

"I didn't go to do it," protested the top-filler. "It fell off."

Ottenhausen glared at the man for a moment, and then turned on his heel. "It won't be healthy for you if anything of the kind happens again," remarked the young chemist as he went away.

The top-filler grinned as he saw the head of Ottenhausen disappear. "It won't be very healthy for you, either, my pretty, before you get through with to-night," he muttered.

Ottenhausen went to the office, and entered his little bedroom. He took from his trunk two revolvers. They had served him well in Texas. They were not weapons of the silver-plated and pearl-handled variety. The barrels were bluish black, and the caliber was forty-four. The chemist slipped a revolver into each pocket of his serge coat, lighted another cigar, and returned to the cast-house with the air of a man who was taking an afternoon walk in Fifth Avenue. He surveyed the furnace from top to bottom. The fillers were breaking up ore and

lime-stone and pitching it into barrows. The pig-bed men had just finished imprinting the form of wooden models into the sand. Everything was ready for the cast. Ottenhausen's eye fell upon a mass of dark cinder lying in the sand hole, bubbling and sputtering.

"How long has this been drawn off?" he demanded.

"About twenty minutes," growled the "cinder-snapper."

Ottenhausen gave the man a quick glance, and looked again at the cinder. "You're lying," he said.

He seized the whistle-rope, and there followed three sharp blasts, the signal for casting. From the cast-house and the filling-floor thirty men shambled towards the hearth of the furnace. There was a look of evil in their eyes. Some of them held their hands behind their backs.

Ottenhausen went nearer the furnace, and made a quick examination. A thin cloud of steam was rising. It came from behind an iron jacket, seeping through a

joint. The water pipes of one of the tuyeres had been cut. To Ottenhausen that meant that the water which cooled the nozzle of the tuyere through which the hot air of the blast was forced, was escaping into the furnace. Ottenhausen knew a furnace as a child knows its alphabet. He saw that the end of the tuyere was being clogged with metal, and that it would only be a question of half an hour before the hearth would be filled with a solid mass of chilled iron, unless the contents of the great crucible were run out and the leaking of the water was stopped.

Ottenhausen saw the men move closer together. He stood there in scorching heat. His brain was in a whirl. He felt the thumping of his heart. His thumbs were in the armholes of his waistcoat. His face gave no sign of the riot of thoughts in his brain. He backed against a pile of iron, and with a quick movement drew the revolvers from his coat pockets and leveled them at the group of men. Then he said, and his words were quick and sharp as the blows of a trip-hammer: "I'll kill the first

man who disobeys orders. Drop those clubs and that iron ore."

The men looked along the shining barrels of two revolvers held with steady hands. Some of them started to take a step forward. Jim Johnson made a movement with his arm. Ottenhausen glanced along the sight of one of the revolvers, and clutched the hard rubber handle with a firmer grasp. Johnson's eye met the look of a man who was only biding his time that he might press a trigger. He of the Red-Ox group let the club fall from his nerveless grasp. Sticks, pieces of iron ore, and a revolver or two fell in the sand. The men of Laird's Furnace had met their match. They held up their hands in mute acknowledgment of the fact.

"Cut off the water from that No. 3 tuyere," commanded Ottenhausen.

The "cinder-snapper" sullenly obeyed.

"Open the cinder notch, and be quick about it," was the next order.

The keeper stood stock still. "Cowards," he muttered, "it's only a bluff; he wouldn't shoot."

There came a cracking sound, and the man jumped clear of the sand, holding one hand to a bleeding ear.

"Anybody else care to call me?" said Ottenhausen, as he swung two shiny weapons again towards the crowd.

The furnace-keeper opened the vent, and a smoking stream of slag flowed forth. A single blast of the whistle, and the top-filler lowered the bell. A pillar of flaming gas showed thirty sullen faces and one face calm and determined.

"Open the iron notch, you fellows," snapped Ottenhausen, indicating three men by as many pokes of a revolver barrel.

Two men bare to the waist hammered with heavy sledges until steel bars were slowly forced into the hard clay which sealed the lower gate of the furnace. The earthen stopper became a glowing shell. The men drew back. The third man stepped to one side, plunged an iron bar into the furnace's mouth, and gave it a quick turn. A fiery flood issued from the notch, and poured along the channel of sand, hissing and roaring and sending forth rays of blind-

ing light. It separated into scores of branches as it reached the sandy bed of open molds. The white glare changed to a crimson flush, and then the cast-house was illuminated by a glow which grew fainter and fainter. Darkness came where there had been light. The men shoveled sand over the tracery of iron. "Cut off the blast! Slow the engines down! Stop up that iron notch!" were the commands of Ottenhausen, given in quick succession.

The men lost no time in obeying him. Standing with his back to a mass of iron, Ottenhausen saw the form of James Hunt. Behind the superintendent were a score of men in dress suits, and further back Ottenhausen beheld several young women. He caught a glimpse of the girl who had clung to the sapling that September afternoon. Their eyes met. Then Ottenhausen turned again to the work which he had in hand. The report of the pistol had set the house party at Eagle's Nest in an uproar. Hunt started for the scene, and his guests followed him.

"Only a little unpleasantness," remarked

Ottenhausen to the superintendent. "We're getting along all right now."

James Hunt, being an altogether discreet person, stood back and permitted Ottenhausen to finish a most disagreeable task. The young women were sent back to the house. The men in dress suits were with them.

"Now, men," said Ottenhausen, "we're getting things in shape again. Suppose a couple of you take out that tuyere."

There was almost a cheerful alacrity in the way in which the men now obeyed Ottenhausen's orders. The tuyere, with its nozzle and cut water pipes, was taken out. The section of the jacket was removed. Sledges and crowbars, manipulated by strong, albeit unwilling, arms, soon broke away the mass of iron which had choked the front of the aperture. Another tuyere was fitted, the water connections made, and the jacket replaced. A cooling stream was soon coursing through a new nozzle, and not many minutes had gone before the hot blast was roaring through the tall tower.

"Go back to work," said Ottenhausen. "I'll stay here until the new gang comes on, and then we'll see what's to be done about it."

"Well," said James Hunt, who again appeared upon the scene, "you won't always be a chemist. As for me, I rather think I have something to explain. The president of the company was down here, and saw the whole business. Confound house parties, anyway."

He of the Red-Ox group of anarchists and several of the ring-leaders disappeared on the following morning. Others were discharged. Discipline was restored at Laird's Furnace, and James Hunt once more held the reins. As for Ottenhausen, he didn't see that he had done anything remarkable. They tried to talk to him about it and to tell him that he was a hero, but he only smiled and said that he did what anybody else would have done under the circumstances; and as to the girl who laughed, he would hear nothing from her on the subject of furnace-men and tuyere No. 3. The

incident with regard to that mule seemed to have been entirely forgotten.

In the top of a tall building in Columbus there is a door bearing a porcelain label which reads: "General Manager." Behind that door sits Carl Ottenhausen, who now directs the destinies of the Mingo Coal and Iron Company. He owns a handsome house in the West End which puts Eagle's Nest to shame. There presides over that household a blue-eyed woman whose very look is merriment. Those two had an anniversary the other day; it really doesn't matter how long they had been married. When the guests had gone, Mrs. Ottenhausen rested a hand upon her husband's shoulder, and looked up into his eyes.

"Do you know when I first fell in love with you?" she asked. "I've never told you, you know. I said I would some day."

"Why," replied Ottenhausen, "I had always supposed that you were impressed by my gentle demeanor when I threatened to do wholesale murder down there at Laird's Furnace. You didn't suppose that I'd actually do all that I said I would, did you?"

"Oh, no, it wasn't then," replied the woman, with a merry laugh. "It was when I saw that disreputable mule throw you over his head."

ACCORDIN' TO SOLOMON

ACCORDIN' TO SOLOMON

BY MARY M. MEARS

HOLD still, Teddie! How d' y' s'pose I can dress you when you wriggle so?" The old woman knelt before the child, one chubby ankle in her hand. She was buttoning his shoe. Above her bent gray head his face showed as fresh as a rose, and his hair was carefully curled. He reached over and dabbled his hand in a basin of water.

"Is I doin' on a boat, drandma?"

She did not answer at once, and when she did, it was in a tense voice.

"No, you're goin' on the cars with your father and your—your new mother," she added, bravely.

"On d' steam cars?" he interrupted, bobbing up and down.

"Yes; and grandma wants you to remember what she's told you. You *will* be

a good boy, won't you—and you won't forget grandpa and grandma?" The face bent above the shoe worked convulsively. He leaned down and tried to see if she was crying. "Drandma," he lisped, "Teddie 'on't go 'way."

She flung her arms about him. "No, no, he must go with papa." She rose stiffly and tied on his hat. Then she led him out of the bedroom, and, releasing his hand, gave him a little push."

"He don't look as nice as I would like to have him, but his other white dress is tore. I packed it, though."

John Wood turned. He was standing beside the center table, pretending to look at some photographs. His wife, a handsome young woman, was poised on the edge of a chair. "He's all right," he muttered, and extended his hand to the child. He did not look at Mrs. Hopkins. "Come here, Teddie."

But the boy caught at his grandmother's skirts. "I do' 'ant to go," he half sobbed. Mrs. Wood adjusted her bonnet strings.

"Come, you haven't seen papa in a long

time," repeated John, but the child slipped back of his protector, wrapping her dress around him.

"No! no!" he screamed.

The new wife pulled out her watch. "You'd better pick him right up, John," she suggested. The old woman cast a glance at her; then she stooped as well as she could and unfastened the little clinging fingers. "Didn't he tell grandma he'd be a good boy, and don't he want to ride on the steam cars?" she cooed.

Reluctantly he allowed her to lead him to the door, when his father would have lifted him. "Ain't you goin' to let him say good-by to his grandpa?" she cried. "You and her go 'long to the carriage, and I'll bring him."

And John Wood followed his wife, a flush on his face. The very pebbles in the path brought back memories of other lighter steps, wandering beside his, and when he reached the gate he could not look at the leaning posts. Shadowed by the decaying cap of one, two names were written—his and another's. He wondered if the rains

had washed away the traces of those paired names.

"*Drand-ma! drand-ma!*" The heart-broken wail sounded above the roll of wheels.

The old woman did not glance at her husband, but went heavily into the house. Theodore Hopkins sat on the porch. He was partially paralyzed, and his face showed pale above his black clothes. His wife saw no reason why he should not dress well as long as he did no work, and in his broad-cloth coat he presented a striking contrast to her in her clinging calicoes and gingham. Now the tears were rolling down his face. He put up his one sound arm and wiped them away.

In the kitchen she sat down and gazed straight ahead of her. Presently the restraint she had placed upon herself gave way. "It's jest *her!*" she exclaimed. "John would have left him here if she hadn't been so jealous. Pretended 'bout the work bein' too hard f' me. I'm sure I ain't complained. Wa'n't Jennie my daughter, and ain't it likely I'd be willin' "

to do for her child? And now they've took him away." She put her head down on the table, and stretched her arms towards her grand-son's half-emptied bowl of bread and milk. "He won't be here to-night to go in his little bed, and he won't be here to-morrow mornin'. I can't wash and dress him no more, nor comb his curls—nor nothin'. Oh, me!"

Supper that night was eaten silently. The boy's high-chair stood against the wall, and they both avoided glancing towards it. At last the old man broke out: "I could hear him when they reached the corner. He was callin' you, over and over."

"I guess she won't take much comfort travelin' with him," was the grim response.

Nevertheless, when the dishes were put away and her husband had opened out his newspaper, she could only sit hopeless, thinking of the impotent grief of a little child. Presently he glanced at her. It was his delight to roll out the words sonorously. "You ain't payin' attention," he cried, sharply, "and you always said it was because of Teddie's wantin' suthin', and now

you ain't got any excuse." She really had a better one, for she was listening to her grandson's crying over a space of many miles, and her lonely arms were aching to reach him; but she bore the rebuke patiently, though the next day she retaliated by putting all the evidences of the child out of sight with a relentless hand until the rooms were as barren as if they had never been littered with spools and clothes-pins, and the numerous unbeautiful articles so precious to a baby. "You were forever complainin' of stumblin' over things; you won't have to no more," she declared. But after a little they began to show that they were sorry for each other. Like two leaning old trees, the same wind that swept them apart for a moment but the more closely intermingled their branches.

Mr. Hopkins, appreciating his wife's loneliness, did not go out on the porch to sit, and Mrs. Hopkins slyly restored all the little possessions to their accustomed places, and by expending more care than usual on her husband's toilet, succeeded, in a measure, in making the old gray head take the

place of the little yellow one. They even talked of the possible advantage this change from the country to the city might be to the child.

"Chicago's a big place, and he'll have more chance livin' there," volunteered the grandfather.

"I guess most any town's big enough for a baby," returned his wife; then added, in what she tried to make a hopeful tone, "but he's dreadful fond of lookin' into store winders, and there's considerable many more shops there than there is here."

Mrs. Hopkins had never been to Chicago. Her husband, however, had purchased goods there. Now he broke into a cackling laugh. "Stores! Well, I guess there are a *few* more than there are in Sheldon. I tell you the boy's eyes'll stick out when he sees *them* winders, and the horse-cars, an' omnibuses, an' people hurryin' through the streets and never seemin' to git anywhere, and peddlers and hand-organ men. I tell you, the little feller'll like it."

"Yes, he'll like that part," agreed his wife. "But she won't let him take any

comfort lookin'," she concluded drearily, "she'll drag him right along."

"Well, she won't try to more'n once," put in the old man. "Remember that day when he came nigh pullin' over that Indian cigar sign?" He laughed again, but his wife sat very still. A red spot grew on either soft withered cheek.

"Do you know what she'll do to him if he acts like that?" she demanded. "She'll *spank* him."

They continued to look at each other. Then Mr. Hopkins got up and took a few halting paces. "Oh, I guess she won't," he said.

"Yes, she will. She ain't one to have patience with him. And, oh, I can't stand it, no way. *Jennie's baby!*" Suddenly Mrs. Hopkins covered her face. Since the announcement of her son-in-law's marriage, a keener realization of her daughter's death had come to her than on the day of the funeral. Her husband eyed her with consternation.

"Why, don't, mother! I guess she won't

do anything to Teddie but what's for his good." His words recalled her.

"Spankin' him won't do any good. I ought to 've told her."

"Yes, you ought to 've." He let himself down into his chair.

"I suppose I could write to her," she suggested, "and I guess I will. I'll tell her that he won't be drove, that he's used to havin' sugar in his bread and milk, what stories will put him to sleep best, and—some other things."

For a time they awaited an answer, but as the weeks passed they gave up expecting one. Their longing for the boy increased. One afternoon, when he had been gone two months, Mrs. Hopkins started to make some calls, but she returned within half an hour. Her face had a strange look. She untied her bonnet fiercely and cast it from her little gray head, then began pulling off her gloves.

"Why, ain't you had a pleasant time?" her husband demanded. "Seein' folks I thought would be good f' you." Then he fairly jumped.

"Theodore Hopkins, air ye a fool? 'Tain't folks I want to see—it's jest Teddie." She extended her little knotty hands. "And I'd rather be *drudgin'* f' him than *mincin'* 'round this way, like an old—ape. When that little Ray boy climbed into my lap, it all come over me. I tell you, I can't stand it no longer, *nor I ain't a-goin' to*. And I'm goin' down to Chicago and tell John so, and he's got to let me bring Teddie back."

"I don't see what excuse you'll offer."

"Excuse enough. I'll tell him how lonesome it is after we've had the baby ever since he was born, and I'll tell him how pindlin' you be."

"I dunno as it's that."

"Yes, it is that, too. Fact is, it's killin' us both. I'll get 'em to let me bring Teddie back, if it ain't no more'n for a visit. There's no use waitin'. I'll get the oldest Smith girl to come and look after you, and I'll start right off."

Mr. Hopkins was almost as excited as his wife, but he still objected. "You don't know anything about Chicago. You can't go there alone."

"I'd like to know why not. I'll write to my niece, Minerva Taylor, and she'll have her husband meet me; then the next day I'll get directed over to John's. I guess I've got sense enough to turn the right corners and read the figgers over the doors."

"Tain't as simple as all that, you'd find. It's confusin'. If it wa'n't for my foot—I dun know but I could——"

His wife interrupted him. "Now you jest stop. I guess Teddie'll be as much as I can look after comin' back, without havin' you on my hands."

And three days later she went. She was seventy years old, and she had never been thirty miles from her own town; but if the magnitude of her undertaking grew upon her as the time of departure approached, she betrayed nothing of the feeling to her husband, and her calmness somewhat quieted his fears; though it was a very anxious face that peered up at her as she took her seat in the carriage of the neighbor who was to drive her to the station. "Now, do be careful, 'Mandy,'" he cautioned, calling her by name as if she had been a girl. "Don't put

your head out of the car winders, wait till the train has stopped movin' before you git off, and in Chicago, if you git turned around, ask a policeman." They had kissed each other solemnly and with a little embarrassment, and now he merely reached up a hand to her. "Good-bye," he said.

She scarcely noticed him, she was so occupied in directing the neighbor to push the satchel far enough under the seat and give her her lunch box to hold; but when the man had taken his place by her side, she looked back at her husband. "You've no occasion to worry about me, father," she said, reverting to the words which had apparently escaped her. "But take care of yourself. Don't try to git up them steps alone. Now, good-bye. I'll be back," she added, "jest as soon as I can git back."

Hiram Taylor met her at the depot. The confusion, the noise, the smoke, the brilliant lines of light winking out of the darkness were to her as the distorted visions in a dream. Her eyes were strained wide open behind her spectacles, and she panted so that she could not answer the few remarks that

he addressed to her. But when they left the car her fright subsided, and by the time she met her niece she was quite herself. The ceaseless beat of traffic kept her awake until near morning; nevertheless she rose at the usual time. "I want to make an early start for my son-in-law's," she exclaimed.

"Why, you ain't goin' over there to-day, are you, Aunt 'Mandy? Hi's got tickets for the museum, and is goin' to git off this afternoon. You wait until to-morrow, and I'll go with you. I can't this morning; the plumber's coming."

But the other shook her head. "Thank you, 'Nerva, but I guess I won't wait. I'll git back to go to the museum, though," she added conciliatingly, "f' I never see one."

Her self-reliant manner deceived the younger woman, and after breakfast she accompanied her to the corner. "Gracious knows, I'm scared to have you go this way," she declared, "though you don't have to transfer or anything."

And the trip was, indeed, a very simple one. She had no difficulty in finding the house. She toiled up the stone steps, quivering with excitement and triumph.

"There, I told father I'd git here all right. My, won't Teddie be glad to see me!"

John himself opened the door. "Why, mother!" he exclaimed. She was so associated in his mind with a certain village home, he would as soon have thought of one of the shrubs in its dooryard pulling up root and coming to the city as her. "How do you do?" he said. "Well! Did you come alone?"

"Yes. Father was awful worried to have me, but I come, and I—want to see Teddie, John." Her voice trembled into a sob.

He gave her a quick look. "Why, of course."

He came back in a few minutes, followed by his wife. The old woman rose and looked past them eagerly. "I'm so sorry; he goes to kindergarten, and Rose has just packed him off; but he'll be home at noon," he added, pitying her disappointment. "Where's your baggage?"

"It's over to my niece's. I'm staying there."

"Why, I didn't know you had a niece

in Chicago. Well, you'll spend the day with us, anyway," he said, with a glance at his wife. Her face was not inviting, but the old lady did not observe it.

"I'd like to, real well, John," she answered, "only Minerva's husband's got tickets for the museum this afternoon, and I promised to be back." She looked smilingly from one to the other. She was on the point of stating her errand, but John, saying he should see her again, put on his hat, and she concluded to wait for a more propitious moment.

For a time Rose stayed with her perfunctorily. The methods and aims peculiar to a kindergarten were outside the pale of the country woman's knowledge. "To think of her sendin' Teddie to a school," she reflected. "Of course, you ain't expectin' him to learn much," she remarked, finally, "he ain't four years old yet."

"No; it's the discipline. In a kindergarten one child helps to curb another."

The grandmother drew a hard breath. "I ain't never found Teddie needed so much

curbin'," she said. "Of course, I ain't sayin' he ain't spunky, but I wouldn't give a cent for a child that wasn't."

They did not get on very well, and when Rose went to attend to some household duties, the visitor began to realize it. "I declare, I ain't very smart; but I won't say anything more," she resolved. Left to herself in the rather pretentious apartment, she looked about her sharply. "I wonder where the photograph album is; I bet she's took Jennie's picture out and put hers in place of it." Her breathing became labored. It was nearly three years since the laying away of the daughter, but this mother was none the less jealous for her. Indeed, it was as though she had gathered up the threads of that un-lived life and woven them with her own more sober ones. Then the thought that John might have locked the album away comforted her. "I guess he ain't forgot," she whispered. She would not cry, but sitting in this home of her daughter's successor, she struggled with her loneliness—a pathetic, brave old figure.

Long before it was time for the child to arrive, she began to watch for him. She was stationed at the window when Mrs. Wood appeared and asked her out to lunch.

"Why, ain't you goin' to wait for Teddie?"

"No. On Friday he carries his lunch, and the exercises are a little longer. Then I thought you said you must get back to your friends by one."

The fear grew upon her that she would have to leave without seeing him. "If I only hadn't promised 'Nerva," she lamented; "but Hiram'll git off, and I mustn't disappoint 'em." She waited as long as she dared. Rose followed her to the door, full of polite expressions of regret, but in the vestibule the old lady turned. "I may as well say just what I come for," she burst out; "I want to take Teddie back for a visit. His grandfather pines for him so," she added, pathetically.

Young Mrs. Wood took on an air of stiff reserve. "As far as I am concerned, I do

not think it would be a wise plan," she said; "but I'll speak to his father, and if he thinks best, he can bring him to Sheldon."

And with that Mrs. Hopkins was obliged to be content. As she turned away, the full meaning of the other's words and manner came over her.

"She didn't ask me to come again; she don't even mean I shall see him." Her disappointment was so keen she could not remember how she came. At last she remembered her husband's instructions, and inquired of a policeman.

Minerva Taylor stepped out on the landing and peered over the railing. "Come right up, Aunt 'Mandy. I've been so worried about you; but I'm sorry if you've hurried, for Ili can't git off."

"Can't he git off?"

"No. There's extra work."

"Then I'm goin' back to my son-in-law's." The weariness had disappeared from Mrs. Hopkins's voice and manner. She straightened her bonnet. "I ain't seen Teddie yet, but he'll be home by now."

And buoyed up by a new determination,

she took the trip again. "She thought she'd got rid of me," she reflected, "but I'm goin' to stay and ask John myself." When she came in sight of the house, Rose was stepping into a carriage. Her heart gave a great bound. The servant had just gone in with a rug and had carelessly left the door ajar. Mrs. Hopkins walked in, smilingly. She was about to call attention to her entrance when the sound of sobbing reached her. She stood a moment, listening, then peered fiercely into the room beyond; but there was no one there, and with sudden wariness, she began to climb the stair. She had reached the second floor when the unsuspecting maid returned and closed the door.

The wailing ceased in a piteous holding of the breath, then became more convulsive. Little choked words sounded through it. There was a key in the door whence the sound proceeded, and at sight of it her eyes gave forth a sudden gleam. "Teddie," she whispered, "grandma's come!" She slipped in and locked the door. At first she did not see him, for he lay in a miserable little

heap half under the bed, whence he had crawled in the excess of his grief. His lips were quivering with fright, but his eyes were expectant through the tears. He stretched out his arms towards her. Without a word she gathered him up and sat down on the bed. "Drandma, *nice* drandma!" His sobs merged into laughter. He clung to her and pressed his little red, swollen face against her withered one, and strained his little form closer. The two swayed together. It was some minutes before she became calm enough to question him; then she learned that he had been shut up in this way because he was naughty. She looked him over carefully: though there were no marks of violence on his soft little body, he had grown perceptibly thinner; and once, when he heard the servant, he started pitifully. It was not a tale of cruelty which she was able to piece together from his confused statements; but she was his grandmother, and the knowledge that he had been neglected and left to the servants and treated harshly by them was sufficient to arouse her indignation. She sat very still, with him

hugged up to her. Ever since he had been taken from her she had been dominated by one thought.

"There ain't no other woman got the right to him I have," she repeated; "for if bein' the mother of a child's mother and doin' for it from the time it is born ain't the *next* thing to bein' the mother of that child, I'd like to know what is? At least it 'mounts to more'n just marryin' the father," she concluded; "and if King Solomon was rulin' nowadays, I guess he wouldn't take long decidin' betwixt us. *He'd* know how extra wives are apt to treat children that ain't their own."

She was convinced that John would be influenced by Rose and that an appeal to him would be futile. They were in Teddie's bedroom, and presently she went into the closet and dragged forth the "telescope" in which his things had been packed when he came.

"Teddie's goin' wiz drandma," he exulted, slipping from the bed; but she caught him up and put him back with a peremptory "Hush! You must be still." And thereafter he sat without moving, but with a face

eloquent as an angel's. She selected only the clothing she had made. There were some new dresses, but she did not pack these, though she examined them critically, twitching at them where they hung on the hooks. "Bought ones," she muttered, scornfully; "look how they're made!"

She worked with trembling eagerness, but the packing was only half finished when steps sounded on the stair. Two servants came along the hall, and the knob was turned softly.

"He's cried himself to sleep. What do you say to leavin' him?"

"Guess we'll have to if we go; she's taken the key."

The old woman was keenly alive to the advantages of the situation, and when a few minutes later they crept stealthily forth, chance still favored them. It was an unusually warm day for September, and there were few people passing. The shades of the neighboring houses were down. But she kept tight hold of her grandson's hand, as though she feared he would be taken from her. She was filled with a piquant sense of

her own daring. Her lips curved in uncontrollable smiles, even while she darted apprehensive glances over her shoulder.

"Hurry, darlin'," she urged. With the "telescope" bumping between them, and uneven, excited steps, the two fugitives reached the car. She kept his head under her shawl, and he submitted, only putting up a hand now and then to wipe the perspiration from his round pink face. His utter confidence in her was touching, they were so alike in their helplessness. Her bonnet had slipped back, her thin brown wrists above her gloves looked like the bones of a bird, and the gray knot of her hair was loosened. Fearing to arouse suspicion, she chatted with the passengers near her, and stared around with an air of being at her ease; but in spite of her assurance, she was just a little palpitating old woman, with her nerves strained to the highest pitch and every energy bent on the accomplishment of one object.

The tumult of the streets terrified and tired her, but not even when she reached her niece's did she allow herself to rest. She announced her intention of taking the night



train home. "Father's there alone, and I guess the sooner I'm goin' the better," she added, dryly. The train left at half-past seven, and Hiram took them down before he ate his supper. There was something about his wife's aunt that aroused his sympathy. "Best not tease her, 'Nerva," he said; "she's got her mind made up."

The two walked in on Mr. Hopkins early the next morning. Stella Smith was just helping him to the breakfast table. He swayed a little.

"Why, mother! Teddie!" he cried. Then he sat down with the child clasping his neck. "We've comed, drandpa! Drandpa, we've comed!"

Mrs. Hopkins watched them a moment, then she interfered. "Come, Teddie, you're tirin' grandpa. Now, *father!*" she expostulated. She took his hand, and held it until his shoulders ceased to heave and he lifted his head.

"'Mandy," he said, solemnly, and yet with a break of humor in his quavering voice—" 'Mandy, I've always give you considerable

...

credit f' knowin' how to git your way, and I knew, somehow, that you'd go there and git back safe; but I didn't expect *this*. How'd you ever persuade 'em?"

His wife smiled. Her very presence radiated a sense of triumph.

"There's different ways of persuadin'," she answered, with sly carelessness. But he still persisted, admiringly.

"I don't see what you could have said to 'em, that they let you bring him."

"Oh, I didn't say a great deal," she returned. "Let's have breakfast." Her husband's praise of her and her knowledge of how she had outwitted her son-in-law's wife added a certain sprightliness to her manner, for as yet this old woman did not appreciate what she had done in carrying off her grandson.

He occupied his old place at the table, like a little king. Both grandparents waited on him, and he stopped every now and then in the enjoyment of his bread and milk to hug first one and then the other, until his head drooped like a tired flower's and he was carried off and placed in his own little crib. Mrs.

Hopkins, also, slept the greater part of the morning, but when she awoke, her elation had vanished. Her husband, however, had waited patiently to hear the particulars of the trip.

"I thought John's wife would bring up all sorts of objections," he remarked, "and I guess she did, didn't she?"

"She said she didn't think it was a very good plan."

The old man chuckled. "Course she didn't. But John knew what would tickle the little feller. How long they goin' to let him stay "

"There wa'n't nuthin' said; but I guess if John had thought a great deal of Teddie, he wouldn't have give him the stepmother he did," she added, bitterly.

"Oh, you hadn't ought to blame him that way, mother," remonstrated her husband. "He didn't know she'd turn out the way she has. I tell you John's had it pretty hard."

Mrs. Hopkins knitted vigorously, but her son-in-law's face would come between her and the stocking. It was not a particularly

happy face for a man still under thirty, and there was a look in the eyes which had not been there during her daughter's lifetime—a look now sharpened to painful anxiety. Moreover, he was the man her daughter had loved. She struggled with the memory.

"And, naturally, he'd like to keep his own boy," pursued the old man, "and it was real kind of him to let you take him."

She laid down her work with a sudden air of desperation. "Who said he let me take him?" she demanded. "No one let me take him. *I just took him.*"

He stared at her. She had made her confession defiantly, but she trembled under his slowly comprehending gaze. He rose and stood over her. "You mean to say that you—brought—that—child—without—permission? That you *stole him?*"

"It wa'n't stealin'," she flashed back.

He waved her words aside. "Woman," he cried, with terrible emphasis, "don't ye know ye can be arrested for *abduction?*"

She paled a little, then rose valiantly to her own defense. "Stop—stop just where you are, Theodore Hopkins," she commanded.

"I know what I've done, and it ain't nuthin' so turrible. I took him, but I had a right to. *Accordin' to Solomon* I had a right to!"

Her husband was staggered. "Accordin' to Solomon?" he repeated.

"Yes, that king in the Bible. Ain't I proved that I care more for the child than she does, and ain't he really my own flesh and blood?"

For an instant she triumphed in the apparent justice of the comparison; then her husband would have spoken, but she silenced him. "And I took him on your account, too," she continued, "and I won't listen to a word. The only person I owe any explanation to is John, and I'll telegraph him f' he may worry."

"Worry!" exploded her husband. "He's probably advertisin' in all the papers and got all the policemen in Chicago out huntin' f' him. He's probably most crazy."

And the situation that faced John Wood was indeed a baffling one. For lack of any other clue, it finally occurred to him that the disappearance of his son might in some way

